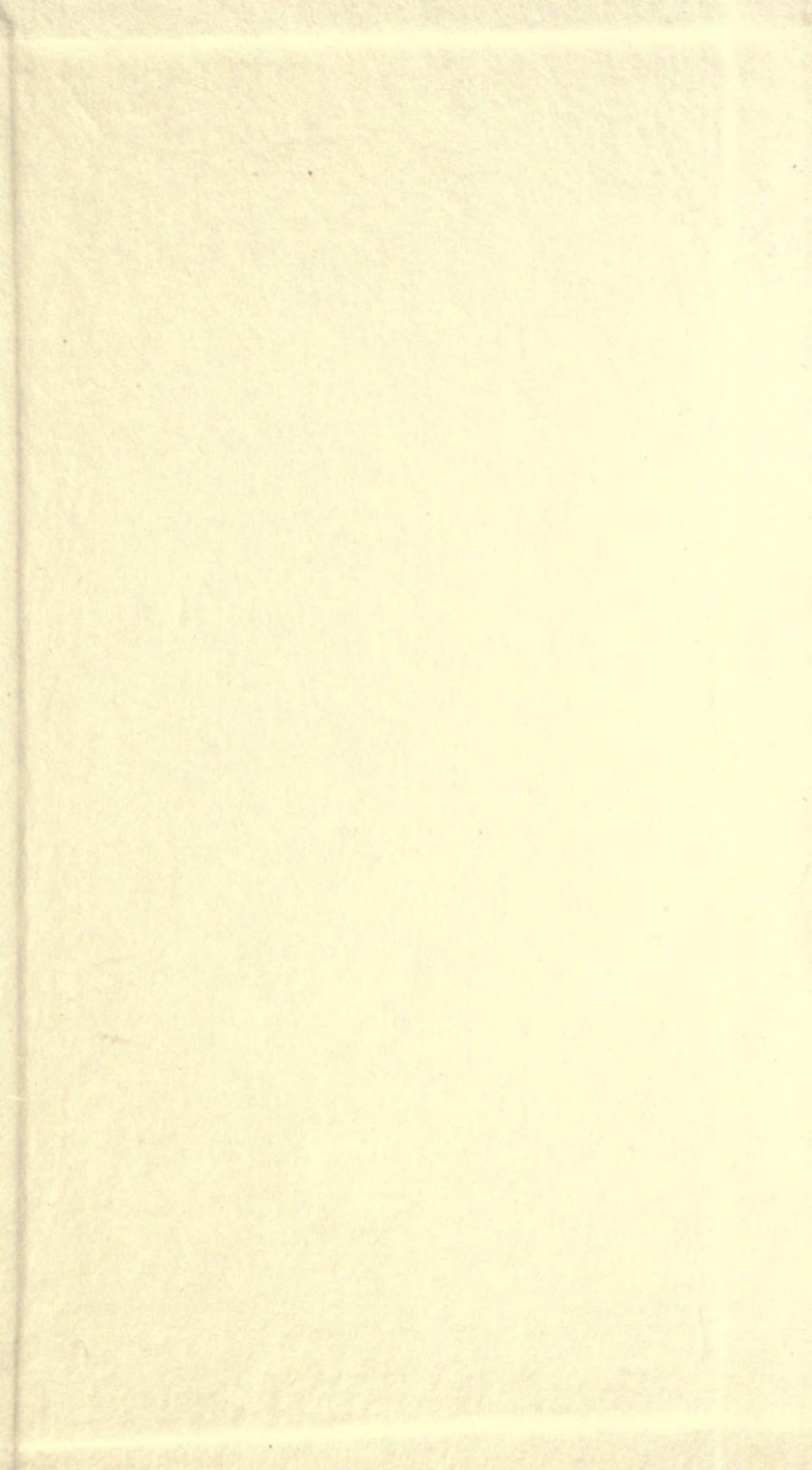


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CLARA FANE;

OR,

THE CONTRASTS OF A LIFE.

Trau. Schau. Wem.

BY LOUISA STUART COSTELLO,

AUTHOR OF "THE ROSE GARDEN OF PERSIA," "MEMOIRS OF JACQUES
CŒUR," "THE QUEEN MOTHER," ETC.

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CLARA FANE.

CHAPTER I.

Your sorrow was so sore laid on,
Which sixteen winters cannot blow away.

Winter's Tale.

THE travellers had finished their exploring visits at Ratisbon, and had visited the fine Temple of the Danube, which the pedantic King of Bavaria, the pedagogue of monarchs, has called Walhalla, where all the great men of Germany who are in favour, and whose opinions did not happen to offend the powers that *were*, are placed in marble, some of them receiving additional immortality through the graver of Schwanthaler, the first genius of his age and country.

The day on which they had driven to this magnificent spot was exceedingly sultry, and on their return to Ratisbon, Sir Anselm, who had

exposed himself too much to the sun, felt extremely unwell. His illness increased in the night, and the next morning it was found that he was seized with fever, which a physician, who was called in, pronounced to be infectious.

The terror of Lady Seymour, on hearing this intelligence, knew no bounds. She was always particularly sensitive to infection ; she was always persuaded she should die of fever ; her nerves could not support the sight of suffering ; in fact, she found it absolutely necessary that her departure should instantly take place. She would wait on the banks of the Danube till the invalid was restored to health ; she would linger at Passau till he joined her ; for she dreaded lest her remaining should agitate him.

"But," exclaimed Clara, to whom she expressed these feelings, "you will not leave your nieces behind, exposed to the chance of being attacked with this malady also ? Let me entreat you to take them with you ; let Mr. Clark be your escort, and I will remain here to nurse Sir Anselm, and as soon as he recovers, which I trust will be the case, I will hasten to rejoin you."

Lady Seymour could not decently decline this duty ; she, therefore, undertook it with the best grace she could, and, greatly to the distress of the young ladies, and amidst their tears and ex-

postulations, they were obliged to consent to accompany her.

"You will catch the fever and perhaps die!" cried Sybilla, sobbing on her neck; "oh, don't send us away!"

"I have no fear of infection," said Clara, "and feel sure I shall escape. You would not have me leave dear Sir Anselm to strangers? M. Ludwig will remain here, and can go backwards and forwards to you, if it is requisite to give you news of how we proceed. A few days' quiet will probably restore him, but there is danger now, and he must be carefully attended to."

It was accordingly arranged as she had suggested, and Lady Seymour and her charges embarked on board a steamer on the Danube for Passau.

The student had wandered away from them at Walhalla and had not returned the next day till after their party had been thus separated: great, therefore, was his astonishment on entering the hotel to hear of what had happened. His first care was to hasten to the couch of the sick man, where he found Clara occupied in attending to him according to the directions of the physician.

To her surprise Ludwig instantly took upon

himself the treatment of the patient, ordering remedies with a promptitude and energy which she could not but consider startling in one whose profession was not that of medicine. When the physician, however, paid his visit, a few hours afterwards, she found that he was not only satisfied but appeared anxious to profit by a consultation with him.

"You need not be surprised, madam," said Ludwig, "that I act as if professional; I have studied medicine, and have passed much of my time in hospitals endeavouring to make myself master of secrets which may benefit mankind—the noblest study to which the powers of the mind can be directed."

"It is indeed providential that you should have done so and be here to assist us at this moment," said Clara; "your friendship for Sir Anselm, I feel sure, makes my entreaties needless that you will instruct and employ me."

"You must absent yourself," said Ludwig, "there is danger of infection."

"Nothing will induce me to do so," said Clara, firmly; "I have sent away those to whom I owed my first consideration, and this is my post until danger is over."

Ludwig looked at her as she spoke with an expression such as she had once seen before—it

startled her as it had done then, she knew not why:

"Remain then," said he, "and aid me to restore the best friend and the most valuable being that ever drew breath."

Sir Anselm's fever increased hourly, and at night he was in a state of delirium, quite unconscious of his position, and knowing no one around him. While in this state, he uttered exclamations as if recalling by-gone years, and would gaze on her, catch her hand, and call her by endearing names—

"Agnes—angel Agnes!" he exclaimed, "why have you staid so long away? I have waited for you many years, and no spirit from the dead came to bring me news of you or our child—forgive me!—Ha! the waves are high!—the storm is up! they cannot live in such a sea!—there is no hope—why did I trust her to such danger!—but he is with her—do not fear!—Domingo knows the currents well—he can swim through anything—see how he peers into the waters—he can see the bottom with those piercing eyes—she lies there, and he made a bed of the salt weed for her cradle to rest on.

"Edmond!" he would suddenly exclaim, "why has he deserted me? I loved him like a son, and he leaves me here to die—Look! how she fades

away!—I saw her first by the light of the stars, but they shine through her shadow—tell her to come again. Bermuda lies in a boundless sea, and there are shoals and rocks on the coast, but we shall reach it—give me an oar—it only wants courage. Edmond! help!—why do you linger—I reckoned on you.”

While he continued thus to rave, Clara stood watching and soothing him with anxious terror which was shared by Ludwig, who, at length, insisted on her leaving the sick chamber and allowing him to remain.

“The sight of you appears to me to agitate him,” said he, “he has some recollections which perhaps it revives.”

Clara could no longer, on this, refuse to obey, and retired to the next room ready to be called at any moment. She had left the door of the adjoining chamber ajar so as to be enabled to hear in case of the patient requiring her services, and, by degrees, she lost the sound of his incoherent exclamations, which became subdued into a quiet murmur, and, at length, silence ensued. She approached the chamber door softly, and found that he slept; Ludwig was seated close beside his pillow, his head resting on his hand and his face turned towards Sir Anselm, in an attitude of attentive watchfulness.

She retired noiselessly, convinced that he had a nurse whose zeal was at least equal to her own.

"This young man," thought she, "is a singular character; he is at times harsh and almost unfeeling in his expressions, yet his actions accord but little with his words. His gratitude appears altogether disinterested and sincere, and he must have a good heart and be but little selfish; for he is ready to devote himself entirely to the man he considers his benefactor."

She sat down in an arm-chair near a window, which looked out towards the square called Heide Platz. The moonlight shone brilliantly on the fountain in the centre, and on the battlements of a gigantic tower at the further corner, which cast a long deep shadow far over the ground. All was calm and quiet and hushed without, and there seemed peace in the cloudless sky and the full clear moon, which looked down on the antique city so often the prey of war and desolation—for centuries succeeding each other, which once sent up to Heaven the prayers of devout crusaders proceeding to the Holy Land, and which in its hideous dungeons acted deeds to

"Make the angels weep."

"Here," thought Clara, "men bent on showing honour to the great author of true religion,

embarked on the glorious river which was to bear them onward to their sacred destination—was it piety or selfishness which impelled them to the undertaking?—was it fear for themselves or gratitude to God that made them buckle on their armour to fight the good fight? Who can pronounce on human motives!—and who can understand why men endowed with knowledge, full of zeal, piety and humility to outward seeming, should take delight in subjecting their fellow creatures to the most excruciating tortures—professing to know that God desired and decreed such to be the case: in the very face of a doctrine which forbids even a thought of cruelty, which enjoins forgiveness, humanity, and above all tolerance, that other word for charity? Those hideous iron spikes, those frightful torture beds, those chairs and screws and chains and nails, for which this old city is infamous, are almost unrustled by time; invented by human creatures for torture, used by human creatures on their kind, and looked upon not only with complacency but a sense of virtue and merit, while applied to lacerate and torment beings whom God had ordered man to love and cherish as his brother!

“Alas! we look on these torture chambers now with shuddering, we inveigh against the cruelty and bigotry of the times of old; but I fear there is no sectarian who has not a torture cham-

ber and fierce instruments to rack his fellow in the recesses of his own heart, which he uses morally to destroy and lacerate those who differ from his creed, although he has but just laid down the volume forbidding to man even his natural anger and wish to defend, or to revenge the greatest of all outrages, when the Saviour himself was being dragged away to execution.

“ In the place of the meekness, the humility, the indulgence, the long suffering, the love and peace, which is our religion, have we not strife and cruelty, dissention, anger, vengeance, pride, contempt and hatred ? What records of weakness, of tyranny, of oppression, of folly, does not every old city present ! In this very square, what striving and violence for mastery in the days of old—whatever may be the truth of the tradition of this city of the tyrant Giant Craco and the valiant citizen, who fought and conquered him, some wrong was probably to be righted which required the strong hand.

“ In this hotel, formerly a palace, they say was born that famous Don John of Austria, who owed his birth to frailty and whose existence was a stain on his parents, in spite of his valour and virtues ; while the virtuous resistance of the unfortunate Agnes Bernauer, another Agnes de Castro—an unlucky name it would seem, and one

evidently connected with poor Sir Anselm's sad memories—caused her violent death. Her prince lover esteemed her too much to disgrace her, but by making her his wife he sealed her doom—the waters of the Danube rolled over her sorrows but could not quench the despair of her husband—thence followed unnatural wars, thoughts of parricide—struggles against power and the destruction of hosts of innocent persons to make a tale of love, which, had it been successful, would have perhaps ended as fatally for its objects. Better die so for one beloved than live to see a cold change creep over the warm feelings, which once gave life and energy to affection.”

While she mused thus she heard the faint voice of the patient, and hurried instantly into the room.

Sir Anselm had waked refreshed, and though his mind still slightly wandered his fever was much abated. He looked at her with recognition and pressing her hand as she smoothed his pillow, said—

“ My gentle nurse, tell Edmond Loftus to come now, you have watched long enough.”

“ He is not here,” said Clara, trembling at the name in spite of herself. She looked round but the student was no longer in the room, he had quitted it as she entered.

"Go," continued the invalid, "I am not quite clear in my brain yet—you still look like Agnes—yet you are not she. Where is *he* gone?"

"The Herr Ludwig has been sitting by you till this moment," said Clara, gently, "shall I call him?"

"Presently," said he. "Miss Fane," he continued, gazing at her, "you have something to forgive, promise me to be indulgent."

Clara thought of the subject of her late reverie and answered—

"I believe you to be mistaken, dear Sir Anselm; but if it should not be so, I am ready to forgive any wrong intended me."

Sir Anselm, still holding her hand, relapsed into quiet slumber, and Clara remained at her accustomed post for some time, till the arrival of the physician obliged her to go to the other room to prevent his entrance disturbing the patient.

When he found that Sir Anselm slept he desired that he should not be disturbed, and saying that he would defer seeing him, departed.

Clara was seated near the door to watch for his re-awaking, when Ludwig suddenly entered: having returned from consulting the doctor—he did not observe Clara and sitting down at a table near the window, unfolded a newspaper, which he began to read. Presently he uttered an exclam-

mation in English, and Clara, looking towards him, saw that he had dropped the paper, one hand was clasped on his forehead and he sunk back on his chair as if in pain.

"Good God!" he uttered, "poor Wybrow!"

The tone, the accent, the manner, were not to be disputed—she could no longer doubt that Edmond Loftus was before her. An involuntary cry escaped her, and the student, looking round, saw that he was not alone. He rose, approached her, and, taking her hand, led her to the table—

"Miss Fane," said he, no longer speaking in a language not his own, "in the presence of sickness and of death concealment and deception are in vain—read that announcement in the list of death."

Clara seized the paper and read as follows—

"On the 1st, in Poland Street, died Maria Spicer, of rapid decline, to the grief of her widowed mother."

She read and re-read the paragraph, uttered no word of exclamation, but stood transfixed with astonishment and sorrow. Meanwhile Mr Loftus had covered his face with his hands, and leant on the table overcome with anguish which he could not repress. Clara looked at him with feelings of mixed character difficult to define.

Compassion, however, predominated over every other; his strong friendship for the unfortunate young man, in whose fortunes he took such interest, his carelessness of self, and his absorbing anxieties for others, showed themselves so plainly at this very moment that she could not listen to the resentment which had at first risen to her heart.

"Yet he betrayed Maria's friend—yet he would injure or deceive me!" This reflection was hushed as she marked the tears which gushed through his fingers and saw his body trembling with emotion.

"Mr. Loftus," she said, gently, laying her hand on his arm, "let me entreat you to be calm; it is not for us to mourn; alas! would we could offer comfort where it is needed."

He looked up and saw how pale she was as she stood bending over him with her eyes full of compassion and tenderness.

"Clara," he exclaimed, seizing her hands with sudden vehemence, "say you can love me! You can pity others—you can pity me even in my sorrow. You are an angel of goodness and gentleness, and most unworthy as I am of you, I hope all from your indulgence; I am overwhelmed with grief for the best of friends; my heart is torn with anguish at the sorrows of another; do not

add to my tortures by your severity—do not be cold and proud with me now I am humbled before you !”

“ Mr. Loftus,” she replied, bursting into tears and sinking in a chair, while he continued to hold her hands, “ you are not generous—you are not just ; you think of the feelings of all but me, and you ask me to exercise towards you more than mortal forbearance. I feel as you do this sad blow ; Maria’s mind and heart were worthy of one who acted honourably, nobly, and tenderly towards her, who never allowed a thought of injury to her to have place in his brain, and who was beloved by the gentlest and most innocent creature in the world—as he deserved. Ask yourself if you deserve anything of me but what you call severity ; but we are in the presence of sacred suffering, our petty wrongs and sorrows are nothing at such a moment : speak to me no more now—I cannot bear it.”

“ Say you forgive me!—say you will hear my explanation, Clara !” cried Loftus, in an imploring tone.

“ I forgive you as regards myself,” replied Clara.

“ What reservation is this ?” cried he, passionately, “ I do not understand you—let your forgiveness be unconditional !”

The voice of Sir Anselm at this moment interrupted her answer, which would scarcely have been in accordance with her former indulgent words, for the image of the seduced Celia mingled with the shade of Maria in her mind, and she was turning from him almost with disgust and fear.

At this sound, however, he instantly relinquished her hand, and she flew into the sick chamber.

Sir Anselm appeared much better, and spoke with much more coherence—

“I seem to have been dreaming of strange things,” said he, smiling, to Clara’s great delight, “I had visions of quarrels, and duels, and carnival habits, and friends in false disguises, and you, always as a spirit of hope and help, amidst them all.”

“There is no longer any disguise,” said Clara, gently, “let nothing agitate you. Mr. Loftus and I will continue to nurse you, and we shall contrive to prove ourselves good doctors in spite of the little experience of one of us at least.”

Sir Anselm kissed the hand of Clara as she spoke—

“I am glad you know all,” said he; “Loftus has been very obstinate and wilful, but it is his character, the only blemish in the noblest nature

ever bestowed on man. Forgive us both—you are formed only to forgive."

"I forgive you, dear Sir Anselm," said she, "at least while you are sick and helpless; our war can begin at a future moment when you can defend yourself like the valiant Hun against the puny burgher of Ratisbon, who, nevertheless, got the better because he fought in a right cause. Get well, and I will have my vengeance yet."

CHAPTER II.

“Je ne verserai plus de larmes—
Mais, helas ! je n’aimerai plus !”

WHILE Clara was thus occupied in attending to Sir Anselm, who was now advancing towards recovery, she received from Lady Seymour and her pupils frequent letters, expressing great anxiety for her and her patient, perfectly sincere on the part of the young ladies, and in her usual strain from their aunt, who wrote—

“ My anxiety almost overcomes me : I dream of you both every night, when I do sleep, and my visions represent the saddest pictures of suffering. Alas ! why did I not remain to assist you to nurse our worthy and excellent friend ! I sometimes reproach myself with not having done so, but I look on the two blooming flowers beside me and reflect that to stay was dangerous for them, and, as you know, I tore myself away from the bedside

of our friend to devote my energies to the safety of those darlings confided to my care by their devoted father. There are duties, which however sad, we are called upon to perform, and we must submit to them even though our hearts are unsatisfied !

“ I am busy teaching the angels to sketch from nature, and when I am unable myself to go with them to the spots we prefer, I send poor Clark who, in my absence, can keep them in practice, and I correct their errors on their return ; so that, you see, I have my hands full, yet I can always find time to write to those dear to me. Do not fail to let me hear how Sir Anselm goes on—is Ludwig of any use ? I fear not ; he is morose and wants feeling.”

From Claudia and Sybilla, who wrote on the same page, Clara received the true statement of facts :—

“ We get on pretty well with auntie Seymour—that is, *without* her, for we are not much troubled with her, for she is always in her room with her maid either dressing or writing letters, so we go off with dear old Clark, who draws us all the pictures we ask for, and we have such charming walks all over these lovely hills. You will be delighted when you come, and we will get dear Sir Anselm up to the top of the hill

where the oddest church you ever saw stands, it is dedicated to St. Maria Hilf and there is a covered way all up from the town of Passau, after crossing one of the bridges; this covered way has no end of stairs but there are a great many landing places for the pilgrims to rest on seats: so Sir Anselm can sit down at every hundred yards, we are so afraid he will be weak, after that horrid fever! well, it is so funny to see the hundreds of wicked people, I suppose they are, who come here in penance, and some of whom climb up the whole way on their knees, groaning and moaning enough to kill one with laughing, because they seem such hypocrites, and as one passes they stop in their prayers and ask for *groschen*, having plenty of time to think of themselves in the middle of their sorrow for their sins.

"This is such a famous shrine that people come hundreds of miles to visit it, and we saw a procession of peasants arrive—there must have been three or four villages, at least—and they sang psalms and told their beads all the way they came, making such a noise that we thought there was a revolution in the town till we found it was a great time for pilgrims, called St. Maria Himmelfahrt, and we saw them winding round and round the hill towards the church; they did not come up through the passage as the rest did, and

I believe some of the very wicked are obliged to climb up an old way which is extremely rugged and broken, and was the only path up till this covered staircase was cut in the rock, more for the convenience of the priests after all, than anybody else, as it is not much toil and you can rest as often as you like.

"The view at the top is perfectly enchanting : there are a great many nice seats under trees and the penitents, as soon as their prayers are over disperse over the hills : we saw them as gay as possible in their several picnic parties eating and drinking as if they had come up to enjoy themselves instead of being *only* religious ; two young women went into a little arbour near us and dressed themselves, having got their wardrobe in bundles ready : they had walked barefooted and now put on smart blue stockings and black shoes with bright buckles—took off their dark cloaks and replaced them with embroidered jackets as fine as you please, and scarlet handkerchiefs. They came out like butterflies, and set off somewhere with two young men to dance ; we longed to go too but Clark looked grave, indeed we thought it better not, as you were not there to tell us if it was proper.

"Nothing can be more lovely than these hills, they are covered with wild thyme and purple

heath and such quantities of wild flowers red blue lilac, yellow, that as far as you can see there is every sort of bright colour shining in the sun, for the peasants in their red and green petticoats bright handkerchiefs and gold caps with those odd swallow tails behind, look like flowers too, at a distance, as they come swarming up to the church by countless paths seeming to cover the whole mountain.

“Clark says, the women are perfect Rubens ; they are fair and fat and rosy and so clumsy ! but certainly handsome, just as those sprawling ladies in Rubens’s pictures look—it makes poor dear Clark so angry when we say this, and he vows we have no taste—but then we ask him if it is bad taste to like Raphael and his mouth is shut at once. We like so to tease him ! the costume of the men here is Hessian boots with tassels, just like his—isn’t that odd !

“As you stand on the top of the mountains you see the three rivers below, on which this pretty town is built. The green Danube, the black Iltz and the sparkling white Inn. You can distinguish each, as they join, by the colour of their waters.

“A fine fortress, like Ehrenbreitstein, only more picturesque, crowns an opposite height : the buildings of the town rise in tiers topped by the

old cathedral which looks very grand, though it is new inside and not interesting.

“ Every day we take a very long stroll, so that by the time you come we shall know the whole country and can be good guides. There is one spot which we delight in, and I have drawn it under Clark’s directions, who says my sketch is exact, though a little out of perspective—but then the place is out of perspective and one can’t bring it right. This is the village of Halls on the black Iltz, which twists itself just here into a figure of 8 and goes to fall into the Danube beneath the fort of the Oberhaus. The woods of pine, part of the Böhmer Wald, cover the hills here and come down to the water’s edge, making a dark back ground for the little compact town, its old castle and walls and spires.

“ The line of mountains following the direction of the Danube is so grand ! they seem by their proud elevation to wish you to know which of the three rivers is the real king.

“ We have walked all over the downy hills and meadows, on the side of the fort of Oberhaus and got into the fort itself, to the great amusement of the sentinels. An officer, a very handsome young man, I assure you, came forward and offered to show us the meeting of the three rivers from a tower—we followed him, and only imagine, his

taking us into a hospital, where sick soldiers were in bed!—he said they had no fevers, so we need not mind, but Clark made a fuss and we had only time to run to the window and see the fine view, which is glorious. We did not tell auntie Seymour, who would have been frightened to death.

“The young officer insisted on going with us down the rocky way into the town—I thought he was a little like Lord Clairmont, but not near so handsome though gentleman-like. It is such a curious walk by the side and under enormous rocks that form part of the castle. We crossed a pretty bridge to the Iltzstadt and then he put us into a ferry boat, and we had a long row to the opposite side to our inn at Passau.

“I think the young officer is quite struck with us; he stood on the shore, bowing and waving his hat till we were out of sight, and we have seen him since in the town. Sybilla says she should like to marry a foreigner—I do not intend to notice any of them.

“Pray, beg Sir Anselm to make haste and come to us, we have so much to tell you both.”

The spirits of Clara were greatly depressed by the sad news of Maria’s early death, which had followed so soon after the receipt of her letter. The entire destruction of the happy anticipations of her young lover was mournful to contemplate,

and the bereavement to poor Mrs. Spicer, she knew, would be a heavy blow, from which it was scarcely likely she would ever recover, for her daughter was the sole object to which all her cares pointed, and for whom she entertained an unbounded attachment, which had become a second nature to her.

"How little time have we in this world," thought Clara, "to plan or to hope! scarcely are our visions formed before they fleet away—scarcely have we looked upon a rising star before some dark cloud shrouds its light. It is not in this sphere that happiness is to be found, even for a brief space."

Her reflections respecting Mr. Loftus were also very uneasy, but instead of avoiding him as before she met him now with perfect calmness, and it was in the presence of Sir Anselm, now recovered enough to leave his room, that she resolved to express to him her sentiments respecting his conduct.

He had not laid aside his disguise, which she had feared he would do and thus create curiosity amongst the servants; but she was resolved not to permit him to continue longer under the same circumstances with her.

Accordingly, when they were all together, on the last day that they proposed to remain at Ratisbon,

as she sat by the side of Sir Anselm, and Mr. Loftus was pacing the room rather uneasily, she summoned courage and addressed him.

“Sir Anselm,” she said, “I have given you proof that I esteem you most highly, and I feel convinced that you regard me with interest and friendship. I am, as you know, friendless, and the more prone probably to cling to the kindness of others. I appeal to you, therefore, for a decision. Mr. Loftus has thought proper to follow the path we have taken, in a borrowed character; I have no doubt he imitates the real student Ludwig, who probably exists, as well as he formerly did Mr. Clark; but I cannot think it edifying to Mr. Luttrell’s daughters, who are under my care, to discover their old friend in such a disguise. I cannot think it just to myself to permit this travesty to continue, and I request that you will represent to Mr. Loftus the impropriety of his accompanying us further on our journey.”

Mr. Loftus stopped suddenly in his walk and stood before them.

“Did Miss Fane suppose,” said he, “that I proposed to intrude myself further? could she think that I had any wish to incur her additional contempt, having already earned it sufficiently. I intend to start to-morrow for Munich on my way to the Tyrol, with no view, whatever, of com-

ing in contact with those I have so much displeased for sometime."

"Edmond," said Sir Anselm, "both you and I owe Miss Fane much apology—you for assuming a disguise to deceive her, I for consenting to your doing so. For the sake of the friendship which she does me the honour of believing in, I conjure her to forgive us both."

"You know," said Clara smiling, "that I forgave you when you were sick to a certain extent, and as I also promised Mr. Loftus to excuse what has passed, I do not meditate any other course. But I wish to prevent, if there is yet time, a repetition of the annoyance which beset me in Derbyshire, in the remarks of persons who concluded that I had encouraged the caprice of Mr. Loftus. I have suffered from suspicions which he knows to be false; they have even subjected me to insult from the father of my pupils, and I could not support more!"

"Insult from Luttrel!" exclaimed Mr. Loftus, "and I the cause! But you knew him before; you are a friend of—it matters not, he told me you were old acquaintances."

"Mr. Luttrel was unknown to me till I entered his family," replied Clara, calmly, "I had seen him before, when he accosted me in the street without knowing who I was; I am a friend

of no person connected with him who is not known to you and to Sir Anselm. I owe you no explanation, nor should I give even this if it were not to end, at once, all controversy. Since you are about to leave us there is no occasion for me to say more, except this—that I expect—I insist, that whenever you appear again where I am it may be without a mask."

She said the last words haughtily and with firmness as she rose and left the apartment.

"Loftus," said Sir Anselm, "you must obey her implicitly. I repent having humoured you so far, and, as you know, I should not have done so but to prove to you her worth and excellence. I hope you have now proof of them; I hope you see that she is a treasure not to be cast away—that she is the reality of your ideal."

"But she does not love me!—of that I am also convinced," said Mr. Loftus passionately; "cold, calm, proud, and unmoved, she proves to me that I create no feeling in her heart beyond indifference."

"Except, it may be, resentment, which is a step," replied Sir Anselm.

"No, it is contempt," said Loftus, "which I deserve. I will give her up; I was a fool to expect impossibilities—to pursue a shade!"

"You are perfectly unreasonable," said Sir

Anselm; you began by imagining you had discovered the gem you sought, and, because it does not fall into your hand the moment you hold it forth, you leave off the attempt to obtain it. You were wrong in your first essay, but doubly wrong in the last. Did she not show you more regard when she saw you in your own person? Appear to her again as you really are, mistrust her no more, and she will learn to confide in you. Meantime she is henceforth under my protection; I look upon her as a child of my own, as I have long considered you, dear Edmond, wayward as you are; you are sure your interests will not suffer in my hands, and when you both meet again it will be, trust me, under happier aspects. Luttrell's character you know, and if he chose, at the club, that vortex of all scandals, to speak lightly of this innocent girl, whom I am altogether convinced he did not know, you should have appreciated his remarks as they deserved."

"He told me the girl I saw him walking with in Grosvenor place, whom I knew to be Clara, was an old acquaintance, and a friend of Celia's; and did I not meet her in the park and see her exchange salutations with that shameless woman?"

"Rely on it you are deceived," said Sir Anselm, "I will ascertain from Clara the truth of

the latter accusation ; the first appears to me to be an evident falsehood. Meantime endeavour to sober down your too ardent mind to clearer examination ; you have adopted my motto of

‘Trau. Schau. Wem.’

too hastily, without observing the hidden meaning in these cabalistic words. You translate them merely

‘Examine those you trust.’

My translation is this

↓ ‘Join the principle of faith to the exercise of reason in
order to fix your confidence.’”

“ You know how much reason I have had for distrust, my dear friend,” said Loftus, “ but I am willing to subscribe to your arguments I assure you, and if I cannot banish this mistrust at once from my heart I will, at least, do my best to overcome it, and be deceived into happiness. To seek one with whom I could pass my life amongst the frivolous women of my own class I have long felt to be vain : Clara is all I sought, and if her mind is as fair as I would fain think it, she is my Ideal still.”

The day after this conversation Edmond Loftus departed for the Tyrol, while Sir Anselm and Clara took their places on board the Danube steamboat for Passau.

CHAPTER III.

'Tis time
I should inform thee further.

Tempest.

SEATED on the deck of the steamer, Clara and Sir Anselm were soon gliding through the waters of the rapid Danube, the aspect of which, though less interesting and exciting than that of the Rhine, is more solemn and grand, from the solitary dreariness of its huge forests whose black mantles cover the mountains that dip their feet in the waves. Here and there a dilapidated castle, grim and ghost-like, lifts its ruins above the pines, a mournful relic of days gone by, unenlivened by the familiarity of frequent visits, such as have long invested the Rhine castles with a cheerful interest.

From Ratisbon to Passau the same solemnity prevails, soothing in its gravity and pleasing to a contemplative mind, though less amusing to the

ordinary traveller than the banks of the “exulting river” left behind. There are no green or purple vines here clinging to the bare and rugged rocks and clothing them with riches and joy, no lively towns and smiling villages ; all is melancholy and deserted, and the voyager can almost fancy he is sailing along some unknown river by an unknown shore, and may expect occasionally to see groups of astonished savages watching the onward motion of the first seen vessel.

The meeting of those peculiar rafts laden with timber, and the remarkable barges which are frequent on the Danube, dispels the illusion, and common life with all its realities returns.

The scene was suited to the mood of both Clara and her companion, and they contemplated it for some time in silence, broken at length by Clara, by a question which revealed the subject of her thoughts.

“ Will you tell me, Sir Anselm,” said she, “ the reason for the strange mistrust of others, which seems to darken the sunshine of Mr. Loftus’s mind ? ”

“ You have spoken of that on which I was just reflecting,” replied Sir Anselm, “ I must tell you his history in order to explain it. Edmond Loftus was a mere boy when his parents died, and you have heard from your friends, the Der-

rington's, that the tutor who had the charge of his education was unfitted for the task. He was full of imagination and sensitiveness, and found no congenial spirit to answer to his: while abroad he fell amongst a set of young men who led him into dissipation, which his good spirit revolted from; but which he, nevertheless, but feebly resisted. He became acquainted with women, more remarkable for beauty and genius than better qualities, and he formed his estimate of the female character by such specimens. Unfortunately, he was attracted by one in particular, artful and seductive, who, for some time, while he was yet scarcely past boyhood, exercised a power over him which threatened altogether to destroy the good seeds in his breast, already beginning to be choked up by the weeds which he mistook for flowers.

"This woman, worthless, but full of talent, wit and cunning, drew pictures of her sex—more especially of that part of it of which she had no knowledge, colouring them from her own impure imaginings—such as convinced him that to expect virtue and purity in woman was a chimera. The artists, with whom he lived, divided their time between laborious study and frantic dissipation, and he learnt to separate his life as they did, into worthy and unworthy pursuits.

" His talents are great, his powers extraordinary, his observation rapid, his disposition generous, he is devoted to genius and places it too high in the scale, not believing in morality or prizing it.

" His mind was in this state when chance threw him in my way at Rome: through the shroud which covered him I discerned the noble qualities of his heart, and I resolved to endeavour to draw him forth from the obscurity of a false life and to give him back to society.

" Fortunately, I pleased him from the first, and he would listen to precepts from me which would have disgusted him from the lips of another; by degrees I placed before his view the folly and nothingness of his present state, the degradation he offered to the very genius he professed to admire, and the ruin he was bringing on his own mind by indulging in courses which his better nature abhorred.

" Above all, and that was the hardest task, I tried to detach him from the dangerous woman whose spells had kept him so long in her enchanted circle, and by perseverance, mildness and resolution, I succeeded even in that.

" Then came the change. I knew it would be violent when it arrived; he cast from him, with horror, all that he had formerly prized, he treated

with loathing and contempt, his past pursuits, and he fled for a time into solitude and gloom. I pursued him there, and joining his retirement I devoted myself to render it useful to him.

"We travelled together through the wildest parts of Calabria, we ascended barren mountains, we exhausted ourselves in journeys on foot, in painful descents into the bowels of the earth, and we returned to society reasonable creatures. Loftus cured of much of his extravagance and no longer in extremes.

"Since then he has lived like others, as far as outward actions go; but my task is not yet over. I am sure of his heart and of his mind: I am satisfied of his morals, and I have awakened a deep sense of religion in his soul.

"At the same time some portion of his old prejudices remain, and as, unfortunately, every day brings to light some fault and weakness in woman and some crime in man, he still argues against the probability of his discovering the Ideal perfection to which his romantic imagination has devoted itself. This makes him unjust and prevents his inspiring, I fear, those sentiments in another which he craves to find, and which live still freshly in his own mind."

"And do men then," said Clara, "expect so much perfection in the opposite sex, when they

not only are aware of the existence, but have run through every stage of evil themselves ? What do they bring to deserve exclusive devotion, pure attachment, self-denying affection ? after a career of heartless amusement, to which all is sacrificed, they repent, and imagine that repentance is to ensure a reward !”

“ They ask it where it is sure to be bestowed,” said Sir Anselm, “ the nature of pure woman is angelic ; she only pities and forgives—she is content with that repentance and forgets the faults that called for it.”

“ You are indulgence itself, Sir Anselm,” said Clara, smiling ; “ I scarcely enter into your enthusiasm, I think if we are so excellent we deserve something more than to have dedicated to our shrine a worn and withered wreath, which has been flaunting all the gay season amidst revel and glare, and in an hour of gloom is brought to us as an offering as if fresh gathered in the dew of morning. We have claims, also, we may have fancies and Ideals too, and why should we, who according to you are so superior, be placed so far below our votaries, that we must be content to accept with humility whatever they may be pleased to offer ?”

“ Superior natures are ever indulgent,” replied Sir Anselm ; “ they can afford to look down

calmly on the weakness of others, being without blame themselves. To imitate, as much as possible, the nature of the great Creator, is to approach him the nearer. He is not as some of the ancients have represented him—a being who, seated above all the world, is alone in unapproachable felicity; too great and glorious to busy himself with things of this earth: without movement towards his creatures of clay,—that would destroy his grandeur—impassible and indifferent alike to the good and evil actions of the insignificant beings beneath his footstool. On the contrary, He is all tenderness towards those whom his breath has bade to live: there is a tie of love which unites the Creator and the creature. He is Charity. This is the difference between the God of Pagans and of Christians—the one was too high for love, the other is love itself. But as ‘he chasteneth those he loveth,’ so we must temper our indulgence to the nature and the faults of our kind, and be severe only to show more kindness. There is no man too bad to be reclaimed, and no woman who could not reclaim him.”

“I am ready,” said Clara, hesitating, “to believe all the good you attribute to Mr. Loftus, but there is a circumstance relative to his conduct which scarcely agrees with what you tell me of the entire reform in his morals. My interest-

ing friend, Maria, whose loss I have now to deplore, told me a strange history, which I fear pointed to no other than Mr. Loftus."

"What can you mean?" said Sir Anselm. "I am convinced some misapprehension has injured him in your esteem."

"You know," said Clara, "that although I was mistaken about Mr. Clark on a late occasion, I had too much reason to know that he was in the habit of assuming that character, and under that name I understood he had been the cause of a young girl, who was known to Maria from childhood and who lived in her neighbourhood, leaving her home and covering herself and her friends with disgrace."

"How is this supposed victim called?" asked Sir Anselm.

"Her name is Celia Sawyer," replied Clara; "her father is a tradesman in Poland Street, where Maria's mother lives, and where I lodged for a time with Mrs. Fowler when I first became known to you."

Sir Anselm looked grave and concerned as he answered—

"Let me beg you to do justice to Edmond Loftus as far as relates to this person. He is entirely innocent. I know on whom the blame should rest, but I have no right to point him out.

Dismiss this suspicion which is altogether as unfounded as those you entertained respecting Clark himself. Edmond is incapable of conduct *like* this, and even before the change which has been wrought in him, *was*, in some sense, ‘more sinned against than sinning.’ This Celia was, I fear, always unprincipled, but it is not to him she owed the disgrace into which she has now fallen.”

Clara’s blush and the tear that started to her eye, told how grateful to her was this assurance.

She remained silent for some time, as did Sir Anselm, both absorbed in reflection; but the smile was restored to her face and serenity to his as the steamer stopped at the little, crowded, slovenly quay of Passau, which being under repair, apparently not without great necessity, was strewn with blocks of stone and pieces of timber, showing the ravages that every winter’s ice makes on these shores, which it requires the snail-like labour of a summer to repair.

The raptures of Claudia and Sybilla on their arrival were extreme, and after having assured herself that there was no fear of infection, Lady Seymour came from her chamber to welcome them.

“Oh my dear Sir Anselm,” said she, “the state of my mind has been fearful since this sad attack. Not a night has passed that my dreams

have not represented you dying—alas ! I would have given worlds to see you, to nurse you, and to prove the esteem I have ever felt for the friend of my excellent nephew. Would that my nerves and strength had equalled my zeal.”

“ Oh,” said Sir Anselm, “ your sympathy alone has done wonders, with a little aid from Miss Fane’s presence, and I am now marvellously recovered—you will see how well I shall bear the rest of the journey.”

“ Then you shall see all the beauties we have discovered here !” exclaimed the sisters ; “ and we will show you both all our drawings—you will think us so improved. But we are quite tired even of this beautiful Passau, and want to get on to the Salzkammergut, where we are to see a country, Captain Von Altheim says, ten times more lovely still.”

“ Altheim !” exclaimed Sir Anselm ; “ who do you know of that name ?”

“ Oh,” said Sybilla, blushing, “ we have made an acquaintance here—with an officer who has been staying at Passau, in this hotel. Auntie Seymour knows about him.”

“ Is it the hero of your ramble in the Fort ?” whispered Clara to Claudia.

“ Yes,” replied she, mysteriously ; “ but don’t ask anything of us—ask Lady Seymour about him.

But what is the matter with dear Sir Anselm ? how pale he looks ! ”

Sir Anselm did indeed look agitated, and appeared overcome with some sudden emotion, which he had difficulty in mastering.

“ Is it the Graf von-Altheim—an Austrian ? ” asked he of Lady Seymour.

“ The same—a connexion of your own, Sir Anselm : he is here on some mission from the Emperor, and has offered to be our guide in the mountains. But where have you left Ludwig ? I do not see him with you ? ”

“ He left us at Ratisbon,” said Sir Anselm, “ to pursue his route to several colleges in Bavaria, having been invited by some of his fellow-students to do so. We shall, therefore, lose his society for some time.”

“ Oh, we shall miss him so ! ” exclaimed the sisters.

“ Not much, I imagine,” said Lady Seymour ; “ he will be well replaced by the Graf von-Altheim, who is charming—don’t you think so, Sybilla ? ”

“ Oh no, that I don’t ! ” cried the young lady, looking suddenly very blooming ; “ he is well enough—but not like Ludwig. I’m so sorry he’s gone.”

“ Don’t believe her, Sir Anselm,” said Lady Seymour ; “ we are sure she is in love with the

Graf, who is a perfect Apollo in person, and so amiable and devoted ; it is quite refreshing to meet in these wilds with so refined a creature."

" He flatters auntie," whispered Claudia, " and thinks her sketches perfection—they are all done by Clark, which he does not know. It's quite a romance about him. I will tell you as soon as I get you to myself. But you won't think him half as handsome as Lord Clairmont, I'm sure."

CHAPTER IV.

Flow on, thou shining river !

Moore.

As soon as Claudia did get her young governess to herself, she poured forth a whole volume of news to her attentive ears.

"It is so curious!" she said, "after we had had that walk I told you of through the Fort of Oberhaus, we never went out that we did not meet the young officer. We knew by his white uniform that he was not a Bavarian, and he looked much more elegant than any of these men here. We soon found, through Guilia, that he was in the Austrian service, and sent here on some mission : he asked Guilia who we were, and she told him all about us, and that we were travelling with Sir Anselm, upon which he called on auntie, and said he was a sort of nephew of Sir Anselm's—his wife's sister's son—I never knew the poor dear darling had had a wife at all. Well, auntie thought him quite perfection, and told him his relation would soon be here, and he

could visit us in the meantime. He seems so fond of us all, and says Sybilla is a fairy, and an angel, and a divinity, and I can't tell you what. She pretends not to care about him, but she is as pleased as possible, and, though she hated German before, is trying all she can to learn it. He writes verses and gives them to us, and he sings and plays and is so agreeable."

"But is he really Sir Anselm's nephew?" said Clara; "was Sir Anselm's wife a German, then?"

"I tell you, dearest, I never thought he had been married; but auntie says his wife died abroad somewhere, and he can never bear to talk about it. I dare say that made him turn so pale when I mentioned the Graf's name. I am so sorry he has been unhappy, I love him dearly—don't you, darling?"

Clara did not hesitate to assure her pupil that she quite agreed with her in affection and esteem for Sir Anselm, and in regretting that any sorrow should have interrupted the calm course of his life.

When she met the Graf von-Altheim she was not surprised at the impression he had made on the whole party: he possessed that singular grace of manner which at once wins attention and favour: his face was handsome and expressive; his eyes fine and lively, and his voice musical and penetrating.

Sir Anselm was much prepossessed by his appearance, and welcomed him with an emotion which he could scarcely subdue sufficiently to express his pleasure at their meeting. He learnt from him that his mother was living in Vienna, after an absence of some years in Poland, where his father had died; but that she was now at Milan, where he was going to join her.

"I shall see her then after an interval, during which the history of two lives may be reckoned," said Sir Anselm. "Does she ever talk of—of me?"

"Frequently," said the young man, evidently aware that Sir Anselm was endeavouring to conceal some secret feeling; "and always with an affectionate hope of meeting you some day again. Your favourite motto is not forgotten by her. I wear it on a ring given by her."

Sir Anselm snatched the ring and kissed it with eagerness, murmuring as he read the motto, "*Trau. schau. wem.*"

Clara started, and involuntarily looked at her bracelet: Claudia's eyes followed hers, and she exclaimed—

"Sir Anselm, how like you and Miss Fane are in everything! She always wears a bracelet with your motto, which is odd, for she says you did not give it her."

Sir Anselm looked up, and taking Clara's arm he read the enamelled letters with surprise.

"What made you choose this motto?" said he; "I fancied it was mine exclusively."

"And I thought it mine," replied Clara; "the story attached to these words involves a mystery which is at all events my own, and which I fear no one of my friends here could explain."

Sir Anselm dropped her arm and returned the ring to Altheim, saying—

"The day that I meet your mother will be a happy, yet a sad day for me. I trust it will not be long delayed, since we are both bound to the same course. I will leave my charges at Como, and accompany you to Milan."

Soon after this the party re-embarked on the Danube, on their way to Linz, Altheim accompanying them, only too happy to be the guide of the rest in their visit to the exquisite country, which bears the name of the Salzkammergat, and embraces some of the finest sites in Europe.

The beauty of the Danube may be said to begin from Passau, and nothing can exceed the loveliness and variety which the doublings and windings of the noble river make here: sometimes closely pent between its banks it seems scarcely disposed to allow a passage for the intruding vessel between its solemn woody forests,

at others widening into a broad expanse like a lake, it hurries on through luxuriant woods and by cheerful villages, whose white buildings, with here and there a country house, make the shores gay, and tell of the habitation of man and his prosperity. Grey ruins succeed and restore the solemnity which seems more natural to the river, and the black pines raise their clustering pyramids to the sky—fitting companions to the grim robber-holds, of which a few walls alone tell the tales of violence once acted within their precincts.

The Austrian frontier begins in a reef of rocks rises from the waters and proclaims another kingdom: a famous monastery once occupied this site.

While the vessel was stopping to allow the usual annoying disturbance of custom house examination to take place, Claudia and Sybilla stood watching a group of strange figures on the quay, all eagerly crowding with the hope of a few *grosschen* being thrown to them.

Nothing can exceed the hideous appearance of these unfortunate creatures: eight or ten dwarfs, all more or less deformed with *goître*, seemed vying with each other to excite disgust; they appeared to have no speech, but short, harsh cries; some were blind, others lame, all squallid

and frightful, and so small that they looked like a race of pygmies or gnomes started out of some cave hard by.

"I hope everyone is not so ugly in Austria," said Claudia; "this is a bad beginning to a beautiful country."

"Do not be alarmed," returned Altheim, "if all our women are not as lovely as the English, at least our men are not so bad as this specimen would lead you to believe. I suspect it is a *ruse* of the custom house to frighten strangers into submission to their tyranny. But you will soon forget this hideous apparition, for we are approaching one of the finest parts of our glorious river; do not compare the Rhine with it, I entreat—confess that it is infinitely more sublime."

"Oh, how Swiss!" exclaimed Sybilla, as they glided past the Castles of Rana Riedl and Marsbach, between which opens a cultivated valley with a village of carved wooden houses, "I should like to stop and follow that pretty valley to the end, it is so much more cheerful than these black pine forests."

"You are all gaiety and sunshine yourself," said Altheim, "and however gloomy the scene you inhabit, there you could make a paradise. I never thought the Danube gay before."

"You are so gallant," said Lady Seymour,

who took the compliment to herself, “one can see you have studied in Paris.”

“Ah! dear madam,” replied he, “do not suppose all that pleasures comes from Paris—to me perfection seems to dwell in England—but you still have a prejudice against the Fatherland, although our nations are so near of kin, while the little Channel that separates you from France divides you thousands of miles in spirit from the fickle, changeable, unstable French. We Germans are true in love and in friendship, heavy and cold as we may appear.”

“But you are neither heavy nor cold,” said Sybilla, laughing, “I should never take you for a German.”

“There you betray your prejudice again, fair Englishwoman,” said Altheim, “why not?”

“You are more like an Englishman,” returned she.

“That is indeed an honour when you say it,” said he, bowing, “because it makes me hope I am not looked upon as a mere barbarian. But see, here is Hagenbach, now you will be whirled entirely round the promontory, which seems an island, and you will imagine you are returning to the spot where you started; in days of yore this was really so, for the spot was enchanted. A lovely lady dwelt in that castle, who was called, in order, I suppose, to express

the gracefulness of her form and the ruddy hue of her lip and cheek, Kirschbaum, or Cherrytree. The whole of this hill, then, up to the tower which she inhabited, was covered with cherrytrees ; but no one could ever land here, owing to the rapidity of the current, and, though the cherries were said to be the most exquisite ever tasted, no one but those in the castle had ever been able to gather them. This made every lord of every other castle on the Danube anxious to obtain cherries from that orchard ; but in vain they sent vessels and men at arms—in vain they provided themselves with ladders, and cords, and hooks, and grappling irons, the moment they approached the shore they were whirled along to the opposite side of the neck of land and back again, so that their heads became giddy and they were obliged to push out into the centre of the stream and give a despairing look towards the tower, where the beautiful maiden might be seen walking on her terrace.

“ The Count of Schaumberg, whose castle you will soon come too, was particularly anxious to obtain some of these cherries, and his son was infinitely more so to gain a nearer view of the fair Kirschbaum herself. He therefore undertook the adventure, resolved that nothing but death should prevent his accomplishing his design. Do

you hear the roar of the river as we turn this point of rock?"

"It is like thunder—or the fall of a whole river over rocks!" cried the sisters.

"This is the entrance into the great defile," continued he, "which is the most magnificent you have entered yet; our course will be for more than an hour through this deep solitude, and it was along this solitary shore that the young count steered his bark towards the cherry hill. The moon was very bright, but the precipitous mountains covered with pines threw so dark a shadow on the waters that it seemed night there while the sky above was as clear as day.

"These rocks, which rise in the centre of the river round which the whirlpools rage and dash showers of white foam over their jagged peaks, alone caught the rays of the moon, and it was on the very summit of the highest that a holy hermit had built himself a cell, which could only be approached at certain periods, so violent were the waters in that spot. The pious were accustomed to bring food for him, which they cast in baskets at arm's length into a cave in the rock, where the hermit sought for it; but, he might sometimes be seen sitting, on a calm day, at the mouth of this cave *eating cherries*.

"Now, it was clear that this fruit came from

the tower-hill, where the lovely lady resided, and the young count, who was very curious as well as pious, resolved to visit the hermit and ascertain, if possible, from him how he procured these treasures denied to all others.

"He watched for several nights at the foot of the rock, till he observed, the moon being then at the full, that a small space of sand where the eddy was generally strongest was now apparent, and he knew that was the time to land and climb the rock. He hastened to leap to this small footing of land, and in a few moments was in the presence of the hermit.

"He was disguised in a pilgrim's dress and represented himself as just returned from the Holy Land.

"'Father,' said he, 'I am charged to deliver to you a blessed relic from Jerusalem, which I have brought, and I crave your aid to enable me to deliver one to a lady who lives in some castle on this river, but where it is I cannot discover. She is called Kirschbaum, and the fame of her beauty and piety has reached the holy city—the High Priest of the Temple, therefore, sends her a slip of a cherry tree, which grows on the holy mount, desiring her to plant it in her orchard and it will bring her good fortune.'

"‘My son,’ said the hermit, ‘I will undertake to deliver this precious gift to the lady.’

"‘That may not be,’ said the pilgrim, ‘I have taken an oath to do so myself, and into her hands alone may I give it.’

"‘Well then,’ said the hermit, ‘you must accompany me to her castle.’

"So saying, the hermit removed a stone at the back of his cave and disclosed a flight of steps, which they descended, into a vaulted passage. Above their heads was heard a din, capable of deafening the ears of a whole multitude, this was the roar of the river under the bed of which they were passing, and the young count felt convinced that they were in a fair way towards the abode of the lovely lady, as indeed, it proved; for, after walking for nearly an hour through a thousand winding ways, impossible to be found but by one accustomed to the route, they at length issued forth into the orchard itself and stood before the gate of the castle, which, at a signal from the hermit, was presently opened by the lady herself, who conducted them into her tower.

"When the hermit had related the errand of the stranger, he entreated to be left for a few moments alone with the lady, as he could not, in the presence of a third person, discharge his commission.

"The hermit betook himself to his prayers while the lady led the pilgrim to a higher chamber.

"What communication passed between them was never exactly known, but the hermit was charged to re-conduct the pilgrim, who returned as he came.

"A few days after this, a gay vessel full of brilliantly dressed persons was seen sailing along the Danube from the castle of Schaumberg to the Cherry-hill where, to the surprise of many within it, it stopped at the base without difficulty, and every one was able to land: the river being as quiet as a lake. The gay party were all provided with baskets which they instantly began to fill with the ripe fruit, and in the mean time the young count had climbed to the tower, whence he presently re-appeared leading forth the lovely lady to whom he had just been united by the hermit, and who accompanied him as his wife to the Castle of Schaumberg.

"Whether the harvest of the cherry orchard had depended solely on the lady's will, or whether she had given the disguised pilgrim a counter spell to enter her domain remained a secret; but from that period both the cherry trees and the shore are no more unapproachable there than in any other place, and as the fair Chatelaine resided

in her tower no longer, it was allowed to become the ruin you see it."

"I suppose," said Sybilla, "there are legends attached then to every castle here, as well as to those on the Rhine. What a pity nothing romantic ever happens to one now! Perhaps it is because we do not live in castles."

"Romances happen every day," replied Altheim, smiling; "but we do not observe them when we are actors ourselves. I look upon my meeting with you as a romance. I will be your knight and you shall be my lovely lady."

"Very well," said Sybilla, "and I will give you as many cherries as you can eat—that is when I have a cherry orchard of my own—but you must wait a good while, for the trees are not planted yet."

"I will wait any period," replied he, "provided you do not send my boat off into a whirlpool at last."

CHAPTER IV.

I saw thy form in youthful prime,
Nor thought that cold decay,
Would steal before the steps of time,
And waste thy bloom away.

Moore.

IT was while they were passing rapidly through the finest defile presented by any river in Europe, where the stream becomes so narrow that, in some places, the perpendicular rocks appear almost to meet and wild eddies cover the dark deep waters with garlands of white foam making the course appear perilous in the extreme, that Sir Anselm and Clara were engaged in deep conversation.

"I owe it to you," said Sir Anselm, "now that I find that Loftus entertained a prejudice injurious to you, in consequence of your casual meeting being in the society of Mrs. Frillet, to explain who she is and how I happened at that time to have her with me.

" My father when he died had omitted to name in his will a son, who was born long after a separation from my mother, the particulars of which event I will tell you another time. As this child was not legitimate he would have been entirely destitute, but for the generous kindness of my mother, and when I had the misfortune to lose her, I, of course, fulfilled her wishes respecting him. He had been educated respectably, and when of a proper age I provided him with means to send him out to India, he was improvident and careless, and after a career but little creditable to himself he died of fever, having most imprudently married almost directly he arrived and without an adequate fortune to support her, a young woman who, like many others, had gone out on speculation and was entirely without fortune herself.

" She wrote to me and I did not hesitate to offer her my protection and assistance—soon after it appears that she made acquaintance with a rich Indigo planter, who was many years older than herself, he was caught by her beauty, and forgetting the disparity of years, made her his wife. But the marriage turned out extremely ill; she discovered that he was a miser and he that she was a flirt and very extravagant; he became dreadfully jealous and she, totally disgusted with

him, and in a fit of folly and impatience, resolved to separate from him: inexperienced as she was she took no steps to secure a settlement, and having escaped from him and taken her passage home, she came to me to claim my promise of protecting her.

"I employed lawyers to endeavour to obtain her rights, and for some years now have been in continual annoyance respecting her. Her old husband has left India and is playing at hide and seek to evade her, and she meanwhile is as improvident, extravagant and thoughtless, as she was when she first married my equally silly brother.

"But she has no bad propensities, and I believe her to be perfectly correct in her conduct, though Loftus will not agree with me. She detests her present husband so much that she chooses to be called by the name of her first, whose memory, perhaps out of opposition, she affects to cherish deeply—and would never seek Frewen, the unlucky man whom she married, but with the hope of obtaining money from him."

"Frewen," said Clara, "then he must be the morose old Indian who lodges with Mrs. Spicer, and was always so cross and tyrannical. She must have gone then into his very den, without knowing it."

"That is singular enough," said Sir Anselm,

"she has very strange imaginings—half Indian, half European, and does nothing like other people. I confess her eccentricities amused me so much that I indulged her too far, and allowed her to make me as ridiculous as herself at times—as I fear you must think, when you look back to Rose Cottage and its affectations."

"I have often thought how different you are now from what you seemed to me at that period," said Clara, "I thought you very eccentric certainly, and every one in your house also, and nothing more so than the sudden dissolution of the enchantment."

"Oh that," said Sir Anselm, laughing, "was not very mysterious. I had hired the house for a time and the period was at an end—Mrs. Frillet was on a visit with me then, and I had no inclination to extend it—she went with me a tour to Scotland where I left her with some of her relations. I was ignorant of the manner in which she had made herself acquainted with you, or I should not have allowed you to be disappointed with false hopes. Her romances are so vivid that they might be called by a harsher name, and her invention so ready that she is never at fault. I seldom made enquiries or attempted to ascertain the truth of anything she said, provided it did not interfere with my arrangements.

"But do you think Frewen is still in Poland Street? it may be of moment to ascertain the fact."

Clara could give no further information, but she had said enough to give a clue to the lawyers with whom Sir Anselm communicated, and it led to results which will be related hereafter.

"The sight of Altheim," continued Sir Anselm—

'Has raised the ghost of pleasure to my soul.'

You can scarcely imagine all that crowds upon my memory, at this moment, both joyous and sad. I see, in imagination, the old castle, near Vienna, with its beautiful gardens, where I first met two sisters, not unlike, and not much older than those fair creatures whom you call your pupils.

"I was then young and ardent, and full of aspirations after the good and beautiful: I was travelling with a tutor, having just completed my college education, and chance directed me to a spot destined to decide my future destiny.

"To the youngest of the sisters I have mentioned, the daughters of a man of high rank, my heart became devoted; but we were considered too young to be allowed to engage ourselves, and were forced to part, with the prospect of a separation of some years, when a hope was held out to

us. We had not, however, although we seemingly agreed, abided by this decision of more experienced persons, and had entered into a promise that no circumstances should ever prevent our remaining true to the vows we then made to live alone for each other.

"We exchanged rings, on which words were engraven intended to express the resolution we had formed and the readiness with which we trusted to each other; these words are familiar to you, and are not uncommon, as a received motto, in Germany—

Trau. Schau. Wem.

for which reason my Agnes had chosen them, her own rich and overflowing language like that of the East, expressing volumes in a few words.

"When I returned to England a series of vexations awaited me: my father's conduct had always been unworthy of the angelic woman who had the misfortune to be his wife, and, at length, he had thrown off all reserve, and treated her so ill that she was compelled to sue for a separation. This he did not desire as she was an heiress with immense possessions, and he persecuted her without ceasing to obtain her consent to supply his extravagance, which was boundless, to the detriment of myself, their only child.

"Constant differences ensued, and our home

was made wretched : I clung to my mother and defended her rights, and thus incurred the enmity of my father. Under these circumstances the idea of my own marriage could not be entertained, as every description of difficulty was thrown in the way of any settlement of our affairs. My mother, too, had a great objection to my marrying a foreigner, although of my own religion, and the space seemed daily widening between me and my beloved Agnes.

"My father had large estates in Jamaica, which he had allowed to be sadly neglected, and there it was necessary that I should go to see that they were properly superintended. It was during my absence that my father died ; and I returned home only to receive the last sigh of a mother whom I adored.

"I was now master of great wealth, and was independent of any controul. My first care was to hasten to Vienna and claim my bride. Her sister was already married to the Count of Altheim ; but Agnes had remained firm to the promise she gave me, and I had the happiness of convincing her that I deserved her devotion.

"We were married, and I took her to England, where, for a few happy years, we lived in Derbyshire in the utmost content and delight. One disappointment alone was ours, that Agnes

brought me no heirs to the property which we enjoyed ; her health, too, began to decline, and I soon became alarmed at the change that appeared in her.

"I dare not dwell on the misery which overwhelmed me when I could no longer doubt that she was threatened with consumption ; one last hope was left me, a warmer climate might restore her. I took her to Bermuda, and there the soft air and genial warmth appeared to revive her entirely. For a year I watched the happy change and saw her blooming and joyous, full of hope and the promise of health ; if anything could add to our blissful state of existence in those Elysian shores it was the birth of a daughter, and for nearly two years afterwards she continued well, when again the fatal symptoms returned after the premature birth of a son, who was born dead, and in a few months the hopes I had dared to cherish were at an end for ever. She died.

"I was now alone with my bereaved child, and, except that the grave of my Agnes was there amongst those cedar-covered rocks and those caves where we had so often wandered, I had no reason for remaining at Bermuda ; the health of my daughter would be more secure in England ; for that soft climate, which had cheated me with hope, promises nothing to infant life. We had a

faithful servant, a free black, called Christopher Tucker, whom my Agnes had attached to her in the strongest manner ; I gave my child in charge to him, with her nurse, his wife, and saw them embark on board a vessel which was taking back a family who had known and loved her mother, and who willingly took care of the only remaining tie which bound me to life.

“ In an evil hour I consented that they should embark without me, as it was necessary that I should go first to Jamaica, and I proposed to follow almost immediately to England.

“ I must relate the rest of this history, since I have carried you thus far, although it is a blank. The vessel in which my child sailed must have been overtaken by a series of storms, which I myself encountered, and when I reached England the first news that greeted me was that it had never been heard of since it left Bermuda.

“ All inquiries were vain—all hope dispelled ; my bereavement was total, and I remained now doubly alone in the world. I could not bear to stay in England, and from that time, nearly seventeen years, I have been a wanderer.

“ It appeared to me that such grief and desolation of heart as mine could find no remedy even in time, and so it was for many years ; but I can now think of all this sorrow calmly, and endure

to speak of it, although the pang is in my heart still which a breath can revive in all its bitterness.

"I shall now, for the first time since my great loss, see the sister of my Agnes once more ; her son you have already seen, and if she is what she was in days long past she will receive you with a warmth of feeling such as a strange resemblance to her we have lost cannot, I am sure, fail to inspire—to me it has acted like a 'spell.'

"Am I then so fortunate as to resemble one so dear to you ?" exclaimed Clara.

"There are many points of great resemblance," replied Sir Anselm, "your voice in particular, both in singing and speaking ; your hair is dark, hers was very fair, and the features are not the same, nor is the height, and yet there are moments when the smallest action of your hand—a sudden turn of your head, cause me to start at the fanciful similarity."

Clara fell into a fit of musing after she had heard this sad story, from which she was not roused until the round towers, the citadel and church on its commanding height, and the long wooden bridge of Linz appeared in sight, and it was announced that their voyage, for the present, was concluded.

CHAPTER V.

There is a fair behaviour in thee, Captain.

Twelfth Night.

To each of the travellers who were lovers of fine scenery, for even Lady Seymour felt or affected some enthusiasm, nothing had yet offered itself to them to compare with that which greeted them after they had arrived at the pretty inn at Lambach, on their way from Linz to the Gmunden See. They had been persuaded to take the tram-road—a railroad with horses—from Linz, and a more tedious and uninteresting mode of travelling can scarcely be imagined, for there is in it none of the rapid excitement of steam or the amusing accidents of posting. All is solemn, quiet, stupid and safe, but slow and sleepy beyond the endurance of lively wanderers—the country being flat and unvaried, renders the journey doubly uninteresting,

and the delight of the whole party when they arrived at Lambach was extreme.

Close to the railroad-station is a large rustic hotel, so clean and comfortable as to excite surprise, served by the most civil of landlords and chambermaids, hostess and porters, who all seem to vie with each other in welcoming the traveller almost disinterestedly, for they charge almost nothing for the entertainment they give, and to glory in displaying their powers of pleasing.

It is difficult not to be pleased in such a charming place, with the blue Traun running its rapid race through emerald meadows before you and the pretty town, with its monasteries and churches enclosed in gardens, and its terraces and vines planted where formerly extended lines of defence, all of which you see from the windows of the hotel without entering the walls, where the illusion would be dispelled.

The first object on arriving is to order carriages to drive at once in search of the falls of the bluest and most transparent of rivers, and before long the square, gigantic mass of the stupendous Traunstein rises in the purple distance, beckoning the wanderer onward.

The insignificant town of Wels would arrest no one for its own sake till it is recollected that here, in a castle of which nothing scarcely now

remains, died the great Emperor Maximilian, the husband of Mary of Burgundy, faithful to the memory of his earliest love to the last.

Sir Anselm reminded Clara of this as they passed onwards, for he had before observed that the story of the interesting heiress had interested her, and there was something in her history which touched a chord in his own breast.

Of all the torrents out of the Pyrenees, where the colour of the *gaves* is of a pure metallic blue not to be equalled, that of the Traun has the most exquisite tint: it is a rich, clear, deep, transparent purple-green, not so dark or blue as the Rhone, at Geneva, but of a brighter shade, though one very similar. Its speed is as furious and impetuous as the most angry of its kind, and it runs leaping, foaming, and dashing from one end of its journey to the other, through valleys more lovely than painters or poets ever dreamt of; nothing in Switzerland, in the Tyrol, or in the Pyrenean valleys can surpass, scarcely equal it in the greatest part of its course and at the spot where it makes its famous leap over the picturesque rocks which impede it, the force of beauty can go no further.

Though not half so broad as the Schaffhausen Falls, to which it has been compared, it may vie with that magnificent cataract in some particulars,

although of course no further than the fall of a small river can equal that of so glorious a body of water at the Rhine.

Nothing can be so unjust as to compare one lovely scene with another and permit either to suffer. When looking on the Falls of the Traun and listening to its thunders as the blue waters dash madly over a hundred jagged rocks, what admirer of Nature is there who, while he remembers the effect of the four overwhelming torrents of the Rhine, driving down with headlong speed over giant barriers which they seem to shake to their very base, does not acknowledge that the miniature cataract is as surprising and as exquisite in its kind ?

The spot from whence the Falls of the Traun are seen, must be sought by a precipitous descent and not till the mill turned by the waters is reached is the wonder visible, while at Schaffhausen from the summit of a lofty, wide, grand, and glorious mountain expands the broad, foaming, descending river, open to all eyes.

Still, at the Traun there is great excitement in hunting for various points of view from whence to see the war of waters best : from the bridge, from the mill, from a rude wooden balcony hanging over one of the falls, in a shed below, on a ledge of rocks above, wherever they are beheld,

they seem to show to greatest advantage, bursting from a back-ground of black and torn pines, and leaping with terrified speed from ledge to ledge, till the various streams unite into the murmuring torrent far below, which runs rapidly but with less perturbation, between the wooded rocks that bound its valley.

Not the least marvel of this scene is the dazzling speed of a little canal by the side of the torrent formed by the hand of man for the purpose of facilitating the descent of the salt barges on the river. The rapidity with which the water bursts along this inclined plane, is so incredible that the brain whirls in regarding it, and yet it has long been by this liquid-road that heavy barges were sent down from the spot where the cataract interrupted navigation to the calmer river far below the mountain.

The canal is cut in the face of the rock, and its bed is formed of wood—the water uninterrupted and pure as crystal, without a bead of foam, seems to make but one perpetual rush to reach its destination, and in a single minute has leapt from the top to the bottom of the ravine, bearing along with it the freight consigned to its care, and depositing it in the quiet water below, where the river is again navigable.

After lingering for some hours in the wild but

sunny valley of the Traun, the party took their way towards Gmunden, threading the mazes of apparently interminable pine-forests, black and solemn, but occasionally admitting gleams which lighted up their red stems as if an enchanted golden wood were inviting fairy guests.

A range of mountains, clear and sharp against the blue sky, extended their shadowy forms before them in long perspective: above all the rest and nearest to the eye, rose the colossal Traunstein, monarch of the region, and the sublimity of the scene continued to increase with every mile which brought them nearer to the lake. They found the little town of Gmunden as full of bustle and noise and disturbative excitement, as if they had reached Greenwich on a grand whitebait day.

Hundreds of people were seated at tables in the crowded rooms of the principal hotel, devouring the trout for which the lake is famous, and by their vociferations and the confusion of the waiters, contrived entirely to destroy the charm of solitude which should accompany the scenery amidst which the town is placed.

To visit the Lake of Gmunden is a pleasure excursion for the inhabitants of the whole extent of the Salzkammergut, and travellers of all nations may be found in ceaseless succession seeking its

beauties, and eager to enjoy the fish-dinners it provides.

The sudden contrast from the solitudes they had passed through for so long a time, was very striking to the party of Sir Anselm. Claudia and Sybilla enjoyed the bustle which distracted Lady Seymour's nerves, disturbed the reveries of Clara, and jarred on the spirits of Sir Anselm.

Count Altheim was delighted to observe the amusement of the sisters, and Mr. Clark busied himself with his dinner first and afterwards in hurrying out to catch glimpses of the lake and mountains, which recent buildings in this Black-wall of Austria have almost shut out from the windows of the hotel.

He returned with news that a grand fête was about to take place that evening, as part of the Imperial Family were to arrive from Ischel to see the lake and mountains by moonlight.

The idea of a fête has always its charm with the young, and it was with lively expectation that they all embarked after sunset and rowed along the pretty tranquil waters to meet the Imperial steamer which bore the expected royal party. The low, undulating hills which rise from the banks, looked soft and calm in the rays of the departing sun, and soon from the windows of every village cottage, of which there are nume-

rous groups dotted over the heights and approaching the water's edge, appeared glow-worm glimmerings which increased in brightness as night advanced, till the whole lake glittered with the reflection of the rural illumination.

Numerous small boats appeared, darting along the crystal surface; their masts hung with garlands of coloured lamps, and the outline of their forms marked by rows of the same glowing fire-painting. Soft strains of music awoke the echoes round, and choruses of clear, deep voices sounded along the shore and died away in the distance. The moon rose in unclouded majesty and threw a veil of silver over every peak and jagged edge of rock which, at the upper end of the lake, send up their pyramids into the sky when—gliding through the midst, like an enchanted bark radiant with illumination—came the Imperial vessel.

A magnificent band accompanied its course, and light and melody filled the whole space between the banks. For several hours this gay pageant continued, and then the royal visitors returned on their way back to Ischel, and left the lake and mountains to midnight and darkness, while the travellers returned to Gmunden to sleep.

The next day the party embarked on board one of the steamers which carry passengers from

Gmunden to Ebensee, and by the light of day they had then an opportunity of observing the beauties which remained to be admired. The shores, particularly at the further extremity of this gem of lakes, lost nothing by a bright sunlight, although the gay character which distinguished their green slopes towards the opening at the first town lost itself by degrees, and perpendicular rocks, and black fir forests appeared where a sudden change of scenery divides the lake, as it were, into two; a few snowy peaks by degrees showed themselves above the rest and told of Alps in the distance, revealing the existence of mountains more sublime than any that had yet appeared, and by their promise almost casting into shade the frowning mass of Traunstein, hitherto the giant and tyrant of the country, and the lord of the lake over which he presides.

Just before the too rapid voyage is finished all the gaiety and cheerfulness of the scene ends, and a solemn gloom takes possession of the whole: the rocks become black and straight, rising abruptly from the dark green waters, on which the shadows of overhanging pine-wood rest: hundreds of jagged peaks throw up their javelins as if a frowning army of conspirators were guarding the pass—a few old towers, a half-seen church, peer out from the gloom, and projecting barriers of stone seem

to threaten to block up the passage of the intruding vessel.

To the infinite amusement of Clara and her pupils, they found that the captain of the steamer on board of which they were, was a countryman. His strong northern accent could not be mistaken even if the bluff, hearty appearance of the man had not at once betrayed the fact.

They immediately hastened to make his acquaintance, and he appeared so delighted with their beauty and gaiety that it was with some difficulty he could tear himself away from their society to give the necessary orders to his men.

"How came you to be here?" exclaimed Claudia. "I cannot believe I am talking to an Englishman in such a far-removed place as this lake, in the heart of the Austrian mountains—do tell us your history!"

"Aye, Miss," said the Captain, "that'd take a good bit of time if I was to begin such a yarn, and this voyage doesn't take two hours from one end of the lake to the other. I'll tell you how it is. After I came from sea I travelled about to see foreign parts, and have been pretty nigh all over Europe, let alone all the rest—well, I came here on a jaunt with a few more shipmates, and never did I see such a set of lubbers as plied along this lake. They'd got a capital steamer,

and were trying to make her walk, but they'd no more idea of doing it than of sailing to the moon; so I couldn't bear to see such blundering, and somehow or other I took to watching of it, and caring for it, and at last I agreed to buy the whole thing out and out, and teach 'em how to manage the craft. So here I am, quite promiscous like, I hardly know how, settled upon this lake. I go away after summer, and amuse myself elsewhere, and come back when travellers arrive. Sometimes I go to England, for its dull work being always away from home. I've got a brother settled now close by Liverpool, and he calls me a fool for not marrying and settling there, where he and his wife is, and if I could find such a sweet-faced lass as either of you now, or such another good creature as my brother's wife, I don't know but I should."

"Suppose one of us," laughed Claudia, "was to say we would have you, would you take us back and go and live there? Where did you say your brother lived, and what is your name?"

"Why, my beauties!" said the Captain, "you've only to say so, any one of you three, now, and see if I wouldn't be as good as my word. The place I talked of is Birkenhead, and my name's Captain Richard Love, at your service—you couldn't have a better."

The sisters laughed immoderately at this, but Clara, trembling with agitation, to their great surprise, laid her hand on the captain's arm and exclaimed—

"Are you the brother then of my dear Captain Love, of Liverpool, and my nurse Susey? Are you the brother I have so often heard them talk of?"

"The same, ma'am," said the Captain astonished in his turn: then who can you be—sure you're not the little girl brother Ned saved out at sea?"

"I am no other," said Clara. "I am the child he saved and brought home, and whom his wife loved, and nursed, and cherished as her own."

Sir Anselm, who had been standing at the other end of the vessel during the former part of their conversation, had approached at this moment, smiling to observe the flirtation established with the Captain, when he was struck by the expression of Clara's countenance and the tears which were running down her cheeks as she seized the Captain's hand and shook it warmly.

"Lord bless my heart, Miss," said the Captain, "who'd a thought of such a thing when I first helped you on board of this boat, that you should be that very child. Why my sister-in-law

is as fond of you as if you was her own, and has never done wishing she had never let you go away with some lady who took a fancy to you. Lord, Miss, it *was* a good day's work my brother did when he picked you up at sea. Well, when you send to my brother and sister-in-law, you just tell them you ran aground of me, and they'll be glad to hear it, and," he added, looking knowing at Claudia, "if you like to say anything else about my marrying and settling, you have my permission so to do."

Clara would have been instantly overwhelmed by the inquiries of her pupils respecting this rencontre and all connected with it, but that the boat had arrived at Ebensee, and they were forced to take a hasty farewell of their gallant friend, while Clara gave him many assurances of delivering the numerous messages he sent to his relatives, as he observed that she would be more likely to be handling the pen than he for some time to come.

"Do not doubt me," said she; "I will tell nurse Susey that you will return and spend Christmas with them—it will be joyful news, I know, for the long-delayed hopes of seeing you continually occupied their minds when, as a child, I used to listen to the accounts of your adventures as well as those of Captain Love."

"Aye," returned he, "my brother and I have seen a good deal of service, one way and t'other, and had a good many odd accidents, but I never found a little child floating out."

CHAPTER VI.

There is not in the wide world a valley so sweet!

Moore.

THE valley of the Traun yields in exquisite scenery to none in Europe: it seems, indeed, to combine the beauties of many countries within its bounds and nothing that the painter or the poet may image can surpass the charm of the drive from the Gmunden See to the secluded town of the Baths of Ischl, which in vain endeavour to conceal themselves in a nest of mountains, one overtopping and crowding on the other, as if to guard the sacred springs from the knowledge of intruding man.

The Traun is here in all its freedom and glory, and comes with its emerald-blue waters dancing and plunging and leaping along its valley of rocks in playful force, like a young giant, whose wild

gambols no restraints can keep in bounds. The road runs the whole way along the side of this beautiful torrent, now mounting almost even with the peaks, now descending close to its brink, through alternate groves of rich trees and woods of pines, till at length the valley spreads out and leaves room for the pretty bathing place and its palace-like erections—built, as it were, in the centre of a star, from whence run far away a circle of branching vallies, losing themselves in the depths of the snowy mountains round.

The season of the baths was over, and neither crowds nor noise interrupted the stillness of the spot, which is cheerful even in the midst of its solemn vicinity of eternal snows.

For some time the travellers remained at Ischl, enjoying its beauties one day and lamenting the floods of rain which, without a note of warning, would render the whole scene desolate the next. This constant variety is, perhaps, one of the greatest sources of interest in these regions, for scarcely for two hours together does the scene appear in the same mood. Now the whole is enveloped in cloud and mist, which clearing off for a few moments or an hour, allows the sun to reveal a whole host of beauties only to re-close the curtain with violence, and consign the whole to apparently hopeless gloom; then burst forth

storms that shake the hills to their foundation, and send thundering echoes through their caverns and ravines, prolonging the beautiful horror ; then, white mists form themselves into diadems, and rest on the black summits of frowning peaks or embrace their reluctant bosoms with their shadowy arms. Anon, the blue sky forces itself a passage, and some bright gleam will gild every peak with living gold : then, spanning the vallies from side to side come forth to sight double and triple rainbows, fainter and fainter till they vanish in the clouds, and again the heavens are black, the rain comes rushing down like a cataract, and angry night closes with a hurricane of wind the hopes of that day.

After such an one, during the intervals of which they had contrived to climb the nearest of the hills of Ischl, called the Calvarienberg, and looked, from numerous sheltered stations, on the crowding mountains, tier above tier, the morning rose in uninterrupted brilliancy, as if storm and rain were unknown in the region, and the whole party set forth on an excursion to the Lake of Hallstadt.

Their adventures Clara described in one of her letters to Mrs. Fowler, as follows :—

“ The drive is one of ten miles, along the enchanting valley of the beautiful transparent Traun,

which appears to me quite unequalled in picturesque charm : it is here as furious as we have everywhere seen it, but its passion is so charming that one would regret that it was ever reformed. The mountains as we advanced rose higher and higher in double ranges : the fields spread out their emerald bosoms, and orchards full of ripe fruit extended along our way. The villages have all a Swiss character, but I am told are less attractive, although I admired the houses extremely with their carved fronts and grey roofs. There is the utmost neatness and cleanliness everywhere, none of the slovenly *picturesqueness* of France, either in the villages or the people. I confess I regret throughout Germany the absence of that delightful vivacity and ceaseless movement, which one meets with amongst the gay French, that ready animation and civility which puts you in spirits in the midst of all sorts of inconvenience. The people here are dull, flat, and apathetic ; they never ask a question, and scarcely answer one ; they go through every action as if it was a duty, without giving the least idea of its affording them pleasure. Whatever their interior qualities it must be confessed that the German exterior is not attractive.

“ Our party, after a most exciting journey, arrived at the Gasau Mühl, a large sawmill for

the countless loads of timber floated down the headlong torrent of the Traun. Here we found a large, commodious boat, covered with an awning, and, without a word being exchanged between us and those to whose guidance we gave ourselves, we entered and began the navigation of the lake, rowed by two silent men and one robust, rather handsome, young woman, in a black boddice and large straw hat with floating ribbons.

"For three quarters of an hour we made our way, past precipitous limestone mountains, rising sheer from the waters to the height of six and nine thousand feet, their peaks sharp, and notched, and weird looking. The fir-woods are here in all their grandeur and gloom, but there are trees of other growth luxuriant and beautiful, and some dipping their branches in the emerald waves that reach them.

"This is the largest of a chain of lakes formed by the Traun, which transforms everything into beauty that it passes. A tower on the summit of a mountain indicates where, nestled beneath amongst the precipitous rocks, lies the village of Hallstadt, which is built in the most singular manner, as if on the face of the cliff; steps cut in the rock lead from one house to another, and there is no possibility of a road.

"The view here of the swarming, crowding,

meeting mountains is sublime, and we made our rowers linger outside that Clark might take a sketch, which he has really done well, for the scenery inspires him. We then pushed our boat into a little creek, and were welcomed by the rustic innkeeper and his attendants, who had a chair with four bearers provided for Lady Seymour, as we proposed to ascend the mountain to the Walbachstrub, as a fine fall, about three miles off, is called.

" You may imagine with what animation we all set out on foot, following the guides who, silent and unmoved, trotted off with their burthen along the level valley for some distance. We were all in extacies at the scenes which disclosed themselves on our way to the summit of this steep rock, now through thick pine-forests, then across fertile plains and meadows, and narrow passes hemmed in by jagged rocks.

" We had just emerged from a wood when we saw exactly in our path, which it appeared to block up, an enormous square mass of solid limestone, whose menacing form seemed to warn us to approach no further. We dared the adventure, however, and passed the monster, in spite of his frowns and those of fifty of his brethren of the 'giant brood,' who peered curiously over his shoulders as if to watch the effect their presence would create.

" Too many inquisitive strangers have, however, of late years visited his domain to make his presence fearful, as is proved clearly by the singular accommodations provided for travellers in this solitude. There are steps cut and kept in excellent order wherever the path of the ascent is too steep to be convenient: after winter rains sometimes the whole of this labour has to be renewed; but the painstaking Austrians are soon at their busy work again, and all is as well arranged as before. We met with several blocks in the path, owing to the late violent weather of a few days, and we wondered how Lady Seymour's bearers would contrive to surmount them; but they left us little opportunity for speculation, climbing over every obstacle as if they were merely pebbles in the path.

" After much laughter and scrambling, which lasted more than hour, we at length reached the top, leaving forests of pointed pines below us, and having paused at every opening to observe the thousand cataracts, huge and swollen from the rain of yesterday, which thundered throughout the way down the black ravine we were climbing.

" We were well rewarded at the end. There, from a broad platform covered with verdure, where a half-circular seat has been placed, we sat our-

selves down, first to recover our fatigue and then to enjoy the marvellous spectacle before us.

“The mighty cataract came pouring from the black and rugged rocks above our heads from fifty different points, for it was more than usually swollen: these torrents leapt from off the rocky ledges as if in terrified haste, bursting through black caverns and hurling themselves into deep, dark basins beneath, again to be dashed on to blocks of stone, and whirled down the foaming abyss and through the forest ravine into the broad, green lake far below.

“The guides were at length induced to speak, and said, with wondering eyes, that they had never seen the Walbachstrub so full and flowing as on this day, for though always grand no doubt, the circumstance of yesterday’s deluge, which we so much deplored, not knowing how much our interest of to-day was advanced by it, had rendered it more than usually splendid.

“Three or four lines of water broken into smoky foam, reminded Sir Anselm of the Swiss Staubbach; but here, though infinitely less in volume, were many, instead of one, leaping into each other, dividing again to be again united, after surmounting the barrier of some rocky wall. There seems a race between the spirits of the torrent which shall first reach the bottom, as troops of

them dart ceaselessly from countless holes and caves, and thunder after each other down the declivity, roaring and whistling and whizzing through the air. All this time, as we stood gazing here or running there, or seated motionless watching this commotion, a tempest of spray was hurled at us from the rocks. Lady Seymour called to her bearers to take her to a more sheltered spot, and we were glad to wrap ourselves in our mantles to prevent our being wet through.

"After we had remained sometime at the top on the platform, we reluctantly descended to a jutting point, where another view was to be gained, and this we all pronounced even more glorious than the first, although it is true we continued to assert the same at every new view we obtained of this queen of waterfalls.

"It was really a relief to see that the four mute bearers at last seemed a little warmed into admiration and uttered a few exclamations now and then. Although they were so heavy in their minds, their outward appearance added not a little to the general effect. Each of them wore a high-pointed Tyrolese hat, with broad black or green bands, and a bright coloured flower and gold tassel hanging at the brim.

"They were obedient and civil, and we ended

by taking them into favour, for they defended us manfully against the repeated attacks of multitudes of dwarfish *cretins* deformed with *goître*, unhappy creatures who infest the valley, and are clamorous for alms. How sad it is that Nature, so full of beauty in all that is inanimate, should exhibit herself in a shape so terrible as regards humanity, and this wherever she is most attractive in her scenery!

“ We were singularly amused on our descent at meeting an English party bent on the adventure we had just achieved : two were ladies, and the third an elderly gentleman, extremely stout and lame withal, for he was walking with two sticks.

“ Sir Anselm agreed to the proposition he made to send off two of the bearers to fetch him a chair from Hallstadt, as he was so weary that to him, ‘ returning were as tedious as go o’er.’ He was full of gratitude for this civility, although it is usual always to send two of the attendants forward on the return, four being required only to relieve each other on the ascent. This party knew not a word of German ; or, it would appear, any other language but their native Wiltshire, and they recounted *naïvely* that being resolved not to be imposed upon, they had rejected the host’s offer of a chair and bearers—the old gentleman not believing the distance to be so great or the path

so steep as the few words of English uttered by the innkeeper assured him it was.

“ ‘ However,’ said he, ‘ I am like to pay for my incredulity, anyhow ; and, since I am so far, I’ll e’en go to the very top, just to say I did.’

“ I could not help thinking that Sheridan’s morality after all was not so bad as it appears, when he recommended his son to *say* he had been in a coal-mine, and save himself the trouble of going there.”

* * * *

“ After our return to Ischl in the evening, we were able, so perfectly splendid was the weather, to wander over the hills close to the town, which does not imply any fatigue, for they are all so arranged that invalids may roam for miles without knowing such a feeling, in fact at Ischl romance is ‘ made easy ’ with arbours and seats and platforms and chapels and stations where the fine ranges of mountains can be contemplated without the slightest difficulty. Half-way up the hills are gardens filled with trees and flowers, where bands of music are stationed in the season—they were making hay in one field, late in autumn as it is.

“ The pretty town lies quietly in the valley, guarded by its phalanx of mountains, with Alps in the distance, grey and capped with snow. The murmur of the Traun reaches the ear from afar,

as it divides itself into twenty streams, winding and turning and crossed by numerous bridges, some of great width, owing to its occasional overflow.

"We descended to one of these bridges, and were astonished at its length, as we continued our walk between piles of floating timber, which loads the river, and, at stated periods, is sent on to its destination by the opening of sluices. On the shore we explored a perfect city of stacked wood, arranged as it were in streets, numbered and marked. The effect is very singular, and the odour of the pine-wood delicious.

"Outside these wooden walls lie many rough, worn logs, their bark torn and wounded from the desperate journeys they have made down the torrent to reach this spot, arriving from the spot where they are cut down and sent headlong from thence down a mountain into the boiling stream whose current is to bear them on. Their turbulent course continues till they are arrested by gratings placed for the purpose, when they are collected and stacked, cut up, sold, and burnt—a wild life of it have these enormous logs, and weary and worn they look, shivered and splintered, and ragged and scratched—like one in the race of life who, born at the height of fortune, has experienced reverse after reverse,

struggle after struggle, resisting, buffeting, striving with Fate till the end finds him mutilated, wounded, battered and prostrate, at the mercy of a triumphant world."

Clara Fane
Clara Fane
Clara Fane

CHAPTER VII.

Be calm, good wind, blow not a word away
Till I have found each letter in the letter—
Except my own name!

Two Gentlemen of Verona.

I have left my quiet home,
With thee through the world to roam.

Mrs. Norton.

It is necessary now that we should leave our travellers on their way, and change the scene for a time to a splendid apartment on the Italian Boulevard at Paris, where, surrounded by *objets* of the most costly description and dressed in the very height of fashion and extravagance, sat a lady whose beauty was scarcely so remarkable as a certain air of boldness and daring and an ease of action which might pass for grace. She was reading letters, some of which she threw aside with contempt, while she paused on others with complacency, smiles and frowns alternating on her face as she glanced at her various correspondence.

While she was thus occupied, the door opened and a gentleman entered abruptly: he did not remove his hat, nor did he take any notice of the lady as he advanced hastily to the table, near which she sat and took possession of several letters that lay there.

"Upon my word, Luttrel," exclaimed the lady in an angry tone, "your manners improve with the air of Paris—you are quite a bear!"

"You are singularly complimentary, Celia," said the gentlemen as he threw himself into a chair, and cast his hat on the ground by his side, busying himself reading his letters, without looking up.

The lady continued, in a bitter tone.

"You seem monstrously anxious about your letters to-day! I wonder what you expect to interest you so much? You are such a good father that no doubt it is from your daughters you wish to hear, or from their fine governess—which is it, sir?"

She delivered the last question in a contemptuous tone, which seemed to attract the attention of Mr. Luttrel, who replied—

"I should be very glad indeed to hear of that pretty creature you speak of, whose gentleness and prudence I so much admire."

"Do you," cried the lady, starting up, "and you dare to say this to my face!—to me who

have left all for you—who have devoted myself to you, disgraced my family and connexions, and followed you about like a tame dog!—you ungrateful, unfeeling—”

“ ‘Stop, Celia, stop!’” exclaimed Mr. Luttrell; “there are some things which my nerves cannot stand, and the cracking sound of your voice, when you are in a passion, is one—it is never very sweet, but it grows positive discord of late.”

“ ‘Insolence!’” cried Celia, bursting into tears of mortification; “you took care not to say that when you did all in your power to entice me away from home, and told me you intended making me your wife when once I had proved my affection to you. Have I not proved it?—have I not sacrificed all for you, and now you turn upon me.”

“ ‘Really, Celia,’ ” said Mr. Luttrell calmly, “I am at a loss to know what you call sacrifice; you are continually naming it, but I am too slow to catch the meaning of your invectives. You lived in a dark, dull, dirty hole in London—your highest grandeur was a drive in a hired carriage to Hackney or Hornsey on a Sunday—your glory a ball at the Opera—more lively than reputable, and there, my love, you know we first met. Your respectable papa, who made me habiliments—by the way, too ill to be worn—has set his house on

fire to cheat the insurance, and got himself into durance vile—I have paid money for him and released him—I have brought you to the gayest capital in Europe—I give you a carriage—a box at the opera and theatres—as much money as you please, and yet you say you have disgraced yourself, and make me out to be a sort of villain in a tragedy, a seducer of innocence, a betrayer of purity—it is too comic!"

"Luttrel," said the lady, "you may be as contemptuous as you please, and run over all the wonderful benefits you have bestowed on me: they amount to nothing—I don't care for them—I scorn them—you promise is unfulfilled—I am not your wife, and you neglect me for others. Do you think I will endure this? You go out all day, sometimes all night—you pass your time in society which I know nothing about—you return haggard, and worn, and sullen, and you refuse to explain your conduct!"

"My dear *exigeante*," replied Luttrel, "I might as well be married indeed as have to support reproaches of this kind. You must be more silly than I took you for to suppose that I ever could have intended to marry you—it is too laughable!—why should I?—there is no need of it!—those were words of course. I have often made the promise you talk of before and I should find it

difficult to keep it. Now let us understand each other. I have no intention of interfering with you, and I do not expect to be continually attacked and bored when I see you. You have your remedy if this pleases you not—mine will be to absent myself altogether."

"You want to get rid of me!" exclaimed Celia; "you want me to do something desperate to give you an excuse for leaving me."

"I do not," replied he, "consider myself bound to wait for an excuse if my inclination points to the course you speak of. But, now we are on the subject, as I hate scenes, we may as well settle things at once. You and I were not formed for each other—we shall end by scratching, and that does not suit me. I will continue to allow you enough to live on—you must put down the carriage and give up the opera-box—I am going to Italy to my family. It is more respectable, and you can be here when I come back, as I dare say I shall soon get tired of a quiet life of that sort."

Mr. Luttrell said all this with the most imperturbable *sang froid*, as he sat leaning back in his chair, while Celia listened with heightened colour and flashing eyes to this deliberate dismissal.

"What!" she exclaimed, "am I to be dismissed, paid off, sent away like a servant—like a

slave, to be taken back at pleasure—after all my expectations and your assurances? Am I to be trampled on, injured, insulted in this way, and do you think I will bear it!"

"I can't well see how you can avoid it," said Luttrel in the same tone.

"You are going to Italy are you!" almost screamed Celia; "yes, to see that girl again—for you care no more for your children than you do for me; you will try all your arts to deceive her also, and if she is such an idiot as I have been, she will be your victim too. But go where you will I will follow you. I will dodge, and watch, and persecute you, and I will take care that no one of your acquaintances and friends shall believe you to be better than you are. As for your paltry provision I disdain it. I have no want of lovers—and though I refused them for your sake till now, I tell you plainly that the affection I had for you is so entirely at an end that I will go off with the very first that offers."

"This girl is full of spirit after all!" laughed Luttrel, as Celia dashed past him, and ran out of the room, banging the door furiously after her; "but she carries it too far—I am bored with her jealousy and suspicion. One might as well be absolutely married—*mais que voulez vous!*—when a man has attractions! She is too wise to do as

she threatens," he continued ; "lovers are ready enough with offers when they see no chance of their being accepted."

Saying this he lounged to the table where Celia had left several open notes, which he made no scruple of glancing at.

"Really," exclaimed he, "I did her injustice, and thought she attracted no eyes but my own. This is *piquante*—she has lovers—well, it will be the more animating. I was beginning to be horribly *ennuyé* with the affair. Englishwomen are so matter of fact."

While he was still turning over these billet-doux which Celia had left *avec intention*, a visitor was announced, and Mr. Luttrel, on looking up, had to exert himself to welcome a friend, which he did with remarkable animation for him.

"Ah, my dear Clairmont," said he, extending his hand ; "you are the best friend I have to arrive at this moment, when domestic cares distress me."

"What," cried the young marquis, while the colour rose in his cheeks, "are your daughters with you in Paris?"

"Good heavens, no!" exclaimed Luttrel ; "what can make you imagine that I would encumber myself with two children. It is bad

enough to have them belonging to one without being a slave to their vicinity."

"I was in hopes they were," faltered the marquis, evidently disappointed; "it seems to me a marvel that you don't keep such angelic creatures always by your side. They would make any place Paradise."

"You speak like a man in love," said Luttrell, archly; "to me the annoyance of children is almost as bad as that of a wife."

"Our tastes are different," said the young man: "I can conceive no happiness equal to a domestic life."

"You cannot I see," said Luttrell, almost contemptuously, "throw off your country breeding and be one of us; you have always aspirations after things which do not exist, and build paper castles which the world with its reasonable breath soon puffs away, as you will find when you live in it."

"Where are your daughters now?" resumed Lord Clairmont, willing to avoid expression to his dissent from the opinions of his more experienced friend.

"Oh, if you wish to know," replied Luttrell, "you had better read Claudia's letter, which I have just received; she writes so much and crosses her letters, that it bores me—I dare say you may

find some interest which I can't in her childish prate about mountains and waterfalls."

Clairmont took the letter offered him with avidity, blushing as he did so.

" You can put it in your pocket and read it at leisure," said Luttrell; " but don't waste the time now in poring over her baby-talk. Come with me in the Bois de Boulogne, we shall meet all the world at this hour, and I have an assignation there, by the by, which I had nearly forgotten."

So saying, the father started up, and glancing at himself in the glass as he passed it, left the room, followed by the lover, who, before he put the precious letter in his waistcoat pocket near his heart, pressed it to his lips.

Mr. Luttrell, with all his affectation of carelessness, was, however, by no means indifferent to the prospect of the marquis's alliance, of which he saw a very fair chance. That he admired Claudia, he could not doubt, and he fully intended in every way to encourage the rising passion he had observed, although he did so with every appearance of total ignorance of its existence. He knew that this was the most likely way to excite the young nobleman the more, and thought it infinitely the best policy, calculating on his own feelings and experience of the world.

Lord Clairmont was the possessor of large and unincumbered estates: he was just of age, was quite new to the world, full of what Mr. Luttrell looked upon as *rococco* notions of propriety and morality, and, having been brought up by a judicious mother with extraordinary care, had so few of the faults of his class and age, that a more eligible match for Claudia could scarcely be imagined.

"If I get these girls off my hands soon," thought the father, "I shall be at liberty—they are a sad clog: my losses at play must be repaired by a rich marriage, and as their fortunes cannot be touched, thanks to their mother's ill-natured suspicions of me, the sooner I am *debarrassé* of those pretty playthings the better. To get them off before they are brought out will be the thing, as then I need not hear the word 'papa' at every turn, proclaiming to the world that I am not as young as my appearance warrants—however, that is good enough for success yet," he added, surveying his figure and handsome face, *à son ordinaire*, with complaisance.

Lord Clairmont that day took little interest in the proceedings of the *Jockie Club* or in the flirtations of his friends in the Bois de Boulogne; his thoughts were intent on the treasure confided to him, and his heart beat stronger against those

thin folds of paper in which the sentiments of the young creature, for whom his preference grew in absence, were expressed.

Clairmont, although as gay and apparently volatile as any young man of his age, was a rare specimen of a man of fashion, unspoilt by opportunity and bad example. His associates were no better than the usual run of dissipated *roués* about town, whose occupations are limited to the search after excitement—who appear in the Omnibus-box at the Opera, and offer to the assembled house a picture of ill-manners and levity conspicuously disgusting. Yet he passed through all these scenes without a stain upon his mind, and he had not learnt to hold virtue and innocence in contempt, or to take delight in low society or low scenes.

Most of his fashionable associates would have been shocked had they seen him after he had re-entered his lodgings on this day, take out Claudia's letter, almost with *reverence*, and sit himself down to enter into the secrets she imparted to her father.

"Luttrel is not worthy of such a child," thought he, "and I feel as if I had scarcely a right to take his place and make myself acquainted with those beautiful thoughts which awaken no interest in his mind. He can scarcely

have opened the letter, for here in one of the folds are leaves which she has marked as having been gathered in the woods near Ischl. She has then been wandering in that romantic region which I hope one day to see—would that I could visit it with such a companion!"

The letter, which he read several times with delight, ran as follows :

" Dear, darling Papa,—Why do you not write to us? You grow more good-for-nothing every day—at every town we ask for letters—Lady Seymour gets shoals, Miss Fane many, even Clark has faithful correspondents, but Sybilla and I clamour in vain at the post-office, scold the clerks, insist upon there being a letter from our papa, and are obliged to be content with stupid messages sent through somebody else to auntie. All we know is that you are well, and now in Paris, which is so much the nearer us, and we are sure you will come to us directly we arrive at Como, so we are impatient to be there and get settled; then you will come and stay with us, and we will play to you, and read to you, and amuse you, so that you will not leave us again. We are sometimes half afraid you do not love us; but that cannot be, it is only that you are so idle.

" Now you shall know what we have done since we left those lovely mountains at Ischl. I

told you of having lost Ludwig, who used to tell us stories and teach us German; but we shall learn in earnest now, for Count Altheim seems to me to speak better, and he is so pleased to teach us; he knows such a number of poems, and Sybilla says he has the sweetest voice in the world. He is extremely handsome, and so amiable, you will like him of all things, only we are afraid he will leave for Milan with Sir Anselm, because his mother is there, and turns out to be a sister-in-law of Sir A's."

Lord Clairmont sighed.

"Alas!" thought he, "I have no chance, I fear: this Count of whom she writes so tenderly is no doubt captivating—yet a German!—can she prefer him? I was wrong not to have followed them directly; I was wrong to have lost sight of my treasure—another will perhaps steal it from me!"

He went on reading.

"We had a long, pleasant day's journey from Ischl to Salzburg. We stopped some time at the little village of St. Gilgen, opposite St. Wolfgang, and saw the charming lake, and another called Fuschl, quite enchanting. The mountain of Schaffberg is very grand and fine, but scarcely as much so as those we had left behind, and I began to

fear we had taken leave of the best, but you shall hear how we were surprised afterwards.

"We were overtaken by rain when approaching Salzberg, and drove first to one hotel and then to another unable to find accommodation for all our party. There was some great business going on, and every room in every hotel was occupied ; at last we got into the strangest dungeon of an hotel you ever saw ; but we have been entertained running up and down the great stone staircase ever since, followed by a little waiter who speaks every language under the sun, I believe.

"It is so odd in Germany!—at every inn there is a little waiter, not more than fifteen, who is the factotum of the house, and is generally quite *a duck!* so good-natured and quick ; we like this one the best of any ; he seems so glad to run about with us, even if everybody else is neglected. Imagine our dining in a tower with a vaulted-roof and round pillars in the centre of the room to support it, evidently a very ancient chapel ; we are sure this hotel has been a monastry, but Miss Fane says we are grown such antiquaries that we say that of every house we come to ; the truth is, all the houses are more like caves scooped out of a rock than the usual dwellings of man—no end to long passages and large, dark rooms. From our bedroom, for instance, we observed in a rcess

a gleam beyond, and, climbing up on a chair, we saw a strange sight, and thought we had got into some wizard's retreat. There was a sort of grotto, the roof covered with stone icicles, blocks of stone piled here and there, and a little candle burning before an altar; presently a door opened at the other end, and a dwarf female came in, without the slightest noise, and crept along the floor to this altar, where she knelt down and began making the most extraordinary grimaces, and after that up she got and disappeared as noiselessly as she had entered. As we did not like the idea of her coming in the night and peering at us, we made Giulia pile up the horrid down coverlids under which one is expected to sleep, so as to block up the view into our room.

"In spite of the rain of the first night we were able to go out next morning, when the heat and brilliancy of the sun were almost intolerable. The great hero of Salzburg it seems is Paracelsus, about whom Sir Anselm has a great deal to say, but as yet we are by no means acquainted with him, except by his picture, which does not make us desire to know him more; it is ugly enough, painted outside the house where he lived, just over the old bridge. We saw his tomb afterwards and went scrambling about over half-a-dozen of the strangest churches that ever were seen, with

cloisters covered with tombs all over walls and floors ; and some with extraordinary churchyards, under overhanging rocks, having sculptured tombs, quite unique in their kind, but really by no means beautiful, so we were glad to get away from them.

“The town is hideous, with great, coarse, ugly buildings, which the inhabitants call fine !—Their taste is the most savage one can conceive, to be satisfied with the frightful blocks one sees everywhere : we laughed at the fountain, which the guide-books tell you to admire—such sprawling figures—oh, how unlike dear Italy !—but the scenery, the mountains ! those are splendid indeed —the natives may be proud of them !

“We went through a black cavern out of a street ; it is cut in one of the rocks—which seem to save walls in Salzburg—but every now and then they fall down, and crush a whole quarter of the town : this cavern led, by steps up and down and in and out, up the Mönchberg, nineteen hundred feet high, but a mere molehill to those in the midst of which it stands, and insignificant compared to the countless ranges of Alps spreading out into the distance as far as you can see. The castle stands finer, on the top of this mountain above the town, than it is possible to fancy, overlooking the country for leagues, and placed on a perpendicular rock, rising up like an enormous

pyramid above the great town below. We were in raptures of delight to sit about on the platform of this mountain, and tried to sketch a panorama of what we saw: turn which way you will, Alps rise over Alps—long vallies with vistas of Alps run away from a large plain below in every direction, and we rejoiced to hear that our way to Berchtesgaden, where we hope soon to go, is down one of these vallies: we shall be lost in the clouds there.

“I wrote this yesterday, after returning from the Möuchberg, and—only pity us! this morning when Giulia came to wake us, she said that not a mountain was to be seen, all was one mass of fog, and the rain was descending in a waterspout. We looked from one window and there we had evidence enough of our captivity—the river had overflowed, as it is fond of doing whenever it has an opportunity—and had inundated the whole of the lower part of the town: as our hotel is close to the river, the great square was turned into a lake, and people were paddling along from door to door in boats. Such a scene! even the Germans laughed! but we were ready to cry, for the deluge continued the whole day, and we were tired of looking out and hoping it would clear.

“Towards evening the sun burst forth on a sudden and produced the most unbelievable effects.

Clark said everything was out of drawing and in wrong perspective; the castle broke out of a cloud and stood alone, no bigger than a child's toy on the top of the church steeple above the houses, in a wreath of fog; this was on one hand, on the other gleamed forth an enormous monastery, in exactly the same style, so that they looked like figures in a magic-lantern passing before ones eyes; presently their bases began to show, and by and by the mists cleared off, and the mountains they stood on were visible enough.

"We lost no time, but all rushed out, avoiding the worst streets of this always dirty town, and getting on the heights, saw a splendid sunset, and the weeping, angry mountains in all sorts of confusion, battling with the blue sky and the clouds, with the mist and the sun-gleams; but the sun got the better, and to-morrow we shall, they say, be able to set out for Berchtesgaden, where the Count now is, and chamois shooting is going on.

"Lebt wohl, bester Vater!"

"Ah," sighed the young marquis, as he replaced the letter next his heart, intending always to forget to return it to Mr. Luttrel, "would I were her companion in these rambles!—would I might be so some day!"

CHAPTER VIII.

Is this the gallant, gay Lothario ?

Fair Penitent.

WHEN Mr. Luttrel returned from his ride in the Bois de Boulogne to his lodgings, not with any intention of seeking the society of Celia, but merely to dress, in order to join some friends at dinner at the *Trois Frères Provençaux*, he was surprised to hear that a change had taken place in his establishment, that no vestige was to be found of the lady who had hitherto shared his retreat, and that a message had been left by her with his valet, coolly informing him that she had no intention of returning.

He received the information without emotion, and proceeded with his toilet, making occasional observations to his attendant.

“ Madame did not then indicate to what part of

the globe she had winged her flight?" said he, carelessly.

The answer was in the negative. She had left the house in a *citadine*, and has given orders to be driven to the apartments of the Comte de Tirlemont; her maid had accompanied her, and she had taken a few articles of dress and her desk only.

Mr. Luttrel finished his toilet and went out as he had intended. The Comte de Tirlemont was precisely one of the guests he expected to meet at dinner; he was a man of the highest fashion in Paris, young, handsome, and married, but separated about a year from a young English wife, who had brought him a fortune, all of which he had spent, except a portion settled on herself.

He regulated the *ton* in dress, amusements, and manners, and it was to him that Celia had resolved to fly, because she knew it would be the most mortifying thing she could do to Luttrel who, naturally envious of younger men than himself, particularly wished to outshine the Count.

When they met at a *fraternal* dinner on the same day, it was, however, with the utmost indifference, and not a word relative to the lady was exchanged: the party, who were all confirmed gamblers, afterwards adjourned to a celebrated

gaming-house, and the interest of the game seemed entirely to occupy all minds. Luttrel had often won and lost large sums to the Count, and on this evening the luck seemed all on the side of his adversary; at last he staked a very large sum, and after a little wavering of Fortune her scale turned in favour of the Comte de Tirlemont, and Mr. Luttrel found himself a loser to a larger than usual amount.

"You are in a bad vein to-day," said the conqueror. "I am really ashamed to clear out your purse, as well as your house, so completely; but I have relieved you from a little expense in the article of *la belle Celia*, therefore you owe me some acknowledgment. Poor thing! she has such a fine heart! I am quite unhappy to deprive you of so good a nurse for your gout."

Mr. Luttrel reddened.

"Your are singularly considerate," said he with contempt, "and I not less so. I do not wish her to starve, and hope my contribution to the establishment will prevent that catastrophe, till similar good throws replenish the coffers of her present adorer."

"Am I to understand," said the Count quickly, that you consider my means are always thus recruited?"

"You have studied the value of English gold like the rest of your countrymen," said Mr. Luttrel.

"What other instruction can we expect to gain in the society of a nation of shopkeepers!" sneered the Count.

"It is a pity our shops are not safe from pick-pockets," retorted Mr. Luttrel.

"Pickpockets!" exclaimed the Count; "do you apply that term to me?"

"To any man who uses mean arts to seduce another's mistress and—who knows?—perhaps to empty his pockets too."

The quantity of champagne consumed at the *Trois Provençaux* at the dinner of that day had, unfortunately, been in accordance with the custom of late years adopted by the Anglo-Gallic members of the *Jockie Club*, and while it had served considerably to excite the spirits of the unconcerned, had had the effect of irritating the tempers of the rivals. Luttrel was piqued, mortified, and annoyed at his losses, while the Count had been listening for some hours to Celia's exaggerated accounts and revelations of the contempt in which her late friend held him and all his countrymen. Her anger and excitement had been wrought to a pitch of fury by Luttrel's contemptuous and indifferent conduct, and she neither considered nor foresaw the consequences of her imprudence.

A quarrel was, therefore, at this moment a

natural consequence of these circumstances, and before the two gentlemen parted a hostile meeting in the Champ Elysées was arranged for the next day.

Meantime, the young Marquis of Clairmont was occupied re-reading the letter of Claudia, and building the most delightful castles for the future of love and happiness.

“If,” thought he, “I am so fortunate as to succeed in gaining the affections of this charming girl, what a prospect is mine. She is all candour and artlessness; a perfect child of Nature, although placed in a high sphere: accomplished, refined, yet frank and open; beautiful and graceful, and with a mind full of all the generous and tender feelings belonging to her extreme youth. Surely her father will raise no objection? It is strange that he has not observed my devotion. To herself alone will I look for a decision—I will not allow my rank or worldly advantages to sway her. I will not gain his consent first—I will try my fortune with the charming Claudia herself.”

He continued to indulge for some time in this agreeable strain of reverie, when a violent ringing of the bell of his apartments roused him, and presently his valet entered with a perturbed aspect, announcing an English friend.

“Good heavens, Morton!” exclaimed the

Marquis, "what is the matter?—you look scared."

"Matter enough," was his friend's reply; "Luttrel is severely wounded in a duel with Tirlemont—it is feared mortally—come with me instantly; he is still alive, and may have some communication to make. He asks for you. It is a sad business altogether. I fear there is no hope."

Clairmont turned very pale as he replaced the precious letter in his bosom, and hastened to accompany his friend to Mr. Luttrel's hotel.

The scene that met him there was melancholy in the extreme: a confused party of friends and acquaintances were assembled in an outer room, and within, extended on a sofa attended by several surgeons, lay the unfortunate man, whose pale and worn countenance showed how much he was suffering.

At the moment Clairmont entered the room, he uttered a sharp cry of pain, occasioned by the effects of the efforts which the surgical attendants were making to extract the ball which had penetrated his shoulder, and he had immediately afterwards fainted from agony. Clairmont thought that he was dead, from his ghastly appearance, and a shudder of horror ran through his frame: after some powerful applications, however, the

sufferer returned to consciousness, and looking wildly round perceived him ; he made an attempt to reach out his hand, which the Marquis hastened to press, and leaning over him entreated to know if he could execute any commands he desired to give.

"They think me dying then," said Luttrell in a faint voice ; "as well that as live a mutilated object. I will not submit to lose my arm, which I hear them prating about. My poor girls," he almost whispered ; "I have not neglected them either—they are well provided for, and—" he was unable to proceed for some minutes.

"Can I—may I do anything for you—for them ?" said Clairmont.

"Claudia is very young," continued the dying man, "but—take care of her."

He could utter nothing more, and sunk back exhausted. Clairmont did not leave his bed-side during the three days that he lingered in pain and on the fourth received his last sigh, but he had never been able to speak after his last mention of his children.

On the first knowledge of his danger the Marquis had written to Lady Seymour, giving little hopes of his recovery ; he had addressed the letter to Salzburg with the hope of its reaching the family there, but the sad event of Luttrell's

death occurring so soon after it was dispatched he felt that it would be better for him to set out immediately for Italy, hoping to arrive at Como, where he nevertheless also wrote, as he thought it probable he might reach that place in person as soon as any communication he could send, and there he hoped to find them.

The sudden change, from life, gaiety, and carelessness, to the gloom and oblivion of the grave, was so striking and fearful, that he was, at first almost overwhelmed with the shock; but the recollection of the grief of the bereaved orphans restored him to himself, and he exerted all the energy of his mind, never before called into similar action, in order that he might be able to go through the task he imposed on himself.

He set out, therefore, with a heavy heart, yet with a hope lingering in the midst of his uneasiness which pointed to Claudia and the future unattended by sorrow.

He chose the route of Mont Cenis as the readiest, and, travelling as rapidly as possible, arrived at Milan, having scarcely allowed himself a night's rest. He remained there to sleep and proposed taking the railroad the next morning to complete his journey. He had scarcely entered the saloon to take some refreshment when an ex-

clamation in English caused him to look towards the speaker, and he recognised Mr. Loftus.

Their meeting was very cordial, and the young Marquis felt a sensation of satisfaction in the circumstance, for his spirits were beginning to fail him as he approached the spot where he was but too well aware his presence would cast a fearful gloom over the lighthearted and enjoying party he was seeking. His gratitude was therefore the greater when Edmond Loftus at once proposed returning on his steps and accompanying him to Como.

"I cannot inform you whether the party are arrived," said he, "for I came myself through Switzerland by the Simplon—I fear not—for the beauties of the Salzburg vallies seemed to tempt them on, and my last letters from Sir Anselm were from thence. We shall do well however to wait for them at Como as they cannot delay long now. This terrible tragedy will be hard for those young creatures to hear, but they have two friends with them likely to support their courage: Miss Fane, although but little their senior, is able to afford them great consolation, and Sir Anselm will attend to their well-being in every way; it is most fortunate that he accompanied them, as that selfish Lady Seymour is not to be trusted in any

way, and would be more likely to fly from a scene of sorrow than to endeavour to soothe their feelings. She has, in fact, left the party for Vienna, intending to join them hereafter ; I suppose she wished to get rid of the first trouble of arranging an establishment, and will come back when she thinks she can enjoy its conveniences.”

“ What age do you take the two young ladies to be ? ” asked Clairmont, timidly.

“ I heard Sir Anselm say,” replied Loftus, not without a slight hesitation, “ that Claudia had nearly reached her sixteenth, and Sybilla her fifteenth, year. They are lovely and amiable, and the most unspoilt creatures I have ever seen. It is a pity that the world will draw them into its vortex, and, under the guidance of such a woman as Lady Seymour, their fate will doubtless be that of hundreds of others, full of the fairest promise and blighted in the bud.”

“ I hope not,” said Clairmont, eagerly, “ why should this be ? —why should they not both meet a better fate than that ? ”

“ Because they belong to a class whence simplicity and innocence are banished as soon as possible, and vanity and ambition supply the place of all good feeling,” said Loftus, bitterly ; “ because women are weak and unstable as water and retain no impressions.”

"My belief is very different from yours," answered Clairmont; "I have lived much, indeed always, till lately, amongst women, and I have seen far more to admire and respect in their characters than in those of our own sex, taken as a whole. I shall never subscribe to your opinions in this respect—I would rather convert you to mine."

"I would you could," said Loftus, sighing, "I should be much the happier."

"Now," pursued the young Marquis, "in the sad instance before us, poor Luttrel, whose loss we lament from the circumstances attending his fate, offered no example to any of us either as husband or father, nor was he, as a friend, either faithful or generous; he was, in fact, I fear, very profligate and unscrupulous in his conduct. That wretched woman for whom he has thrown away his life, was, I hear betrayed from her home by him, and only shared the fate of many. Look on the picture on the other hand presented by his amiable wife, beloved by all who knew her, a pattern of gentleness and endurance, dying of a broken heart—look at her lovely children, surely they might redeem their class."

"You are an enthusiast," said Loftus, smiling, "but you lean, perhaps, to the best side; it is happier to trust even too much than be ever

picious fears ; I wish I had your youthful aspirations."

" You are not so many years older, said Clairmont, " as to have a right to loose them, and I look forward to your agreeing with me entirely some day in acknowledging the superiority of women. We owe them too much to be ungrateful."

CHAPTER IX.

Es weht
Ein Schauer vom Gewölb 'herab
Und fasst mich an !

Faust.

“ Now, my darling Miss Fane,” said Sybilla, one day to her governess, “ can you imagine the possibility of any people being happier than we are at present?—don’t pretend to say the contrary: first of all, auntie Seymour has disappeared and left us to our devices; Ludwig with his grave face and ugly student’s dress is gone; Clark is carried off, so he does not tease us about drawing; and you and Sir Anselm are ready to indulge us in everything; Count Altheim is the most goodnatured of all goodnatured creatures; and we five are enjoying everything it is possible to wish for. Our weather is as if made on purpose, our mountains are clear as if cut out against the sky, our flowers are

bright as jewels, our lakes like silver, and ourselves charming!"

" You vain thing!" exclaimed Claudia, " who said you were one of the charming!—Yes, I do believe we are happy people, and really I often wonder why there is so much said about the misery of the world; I am almost sixteen and I have seen very little but happiness—I do not know what gloom means, except," she added, suddenly checking herself, "to be sure I am sad sometimes, because dear papa will not write, and because he is not with us—we should be happier if he were here, shouldn't we, Sybilla?"

" Yes," replied her sister, " but then he likes to stay in Paris and does not care about mountains, so we ought not to want him away. I dare say he is gay enough, we need not fret about him."

" I am going to write him such a letter, when we get to Como!" said Claudia, "he cannot resist coming, and then I shall even be happier than now."

This conversation went on while the three were sitting at Berchtesgaden on a wooden bench placed on one of the long galleries which are made for the convenience of the workmen, by the side of the huge pipes which convey the brine from the salt works to its destination.

These pipes and galleries may be followed for a long distance, sometimes along the surface of a perpendicular rocky mountain which overlooks some of the most beautiful scenery in Europe, and sometimes through charming woods and across luxuriant meadows. The walks and drives in all directions in the neighbourhood of this Bavarian hunting retreat are singularly agreeable, leading to spots of the most sublime as well as the most rural character.

The little town lies in an irregular and picturesque manner in a valley, through which meanders the foaming and restless mountain stream of the Albe, forming a series of cascades in its course. Hundreds of mountains crowd round this spot, with several more stupendous than the rest overpowering their brethren by their superior magnificence. Above all, the monarch of this region, rises the awful guardian of the passes, the glorious Watzman, with his forked peaks covered with eternal snow, yielding to no mountain in Europe for exquisite form of outline and grandeur of effect.

There are times in the valley when this stern watcher makes himself so visible as to appear rising immediately above the village, at others he recedes and cloaks himself in white clouds: in moonlight he comes forth occasionally in all his

melancholy glory, like a deposed monarch lifting his crowned head amidst a new and shadowy world where his sway is recognised. Cold, calm, and solemn, lie the moonbeams on the lakes of ice and fields of snow which extend between the peaks of his summit, and the midnight gazer who stands watching their immovable forms almost shudders as he imagines that he is looking into a region sacred to death, where neither warmth nor breath is, and from whence those who have once arrived return no more.

Even the lively spirits of the youthful sisters, animated by day in the contemplation of these gigantic forms shining in the sun and piercing a cloudless blue sky, were saddened by the awful change which moonlight made on the scene, and gazed silently on the countless giants which support the throne of this icy king of terrors, in a region which Nature has made during her winter reign an abode of uninterrupted solitude, sublime in its unimaginable loneliness, and where at night when the last lingering fire-hues of day have left the lately glowing mountains, she calls up all the spectres of a land of secrets and paints a picture of unspeakable dread.

The party lingered for some time amongst these magnificent scenes, unable to resolve to quit them : varying the enjoyment by visits to the

lonely lakes which lie embosomed amidst their deep recesses, and seeking for the secret fountains where the mighty cataracts come raving from the rocks.

One of those which peculiarly attracted them was the wondrous fall of the Waldbach, one of the most appalling in its character and gloomy in its position they had seen. The drive to it from Berchtesgaden is over hills of lofty pines, by a road singularly steep on the heights, and leading through deep vallies which seem almost impervious to the light.

They left their carriage on a wild waste, and climbed for nearly an hour a steep, barren hill by the side of the roaring flood, which was rushing towards the valley from a bed of black rocks lost far in the distant heights.

When the highest part of the hill was reached they rested a little on a bank overlooking the torrent, and were so much struck by its sublimity that they pronounced it scarcely possible to be exceeded; as, however, they advanced and the ravine of black stone grew narrower and closer, they felt that each step they took the beautiful horror was increasing.

Even along the surface of these stupendous rocks extend those marvellous pipes which intersect the whole country and carry the precious

salt from one valley to another across heights apparently inaccessible even to the foot of the chamois; yet Commerce, that genius at the wave of whose wand rocks and mountains sink down, has planed a way for herself amongst these defiles, and, obedient to her command, the whole rock from its summit to its base is cut in steps and divided in platforms, the whole guarded by strong balustrades of timber, capable of defying the fury of the devastating rains and overflowing torrents which sweep down from above. Sometimes in winter these barriers give way, and every season they require renewing in order that no interruption may take place in the transport of the salt: several hundred workmen are immediately employed on these occasions, and the ravages of the inimical elements are made to disappear.

Claudia, holding the arm of Sir Anselm, advanced first up this defile—the Count had given his arm to Sybilla, and Clara depended on their guide for support on the slippery ascent, which they all reached in safety, arriving at the very highest extremity of the pass, from whence they looked down on a scene of surpassing grandeur. On one side the boiling torrent came dashing over countless rocks, and thundered down the black ravine, shaking the blocks that hemmed in its progress; on the other, far below, the waters lay in a

clear blue lake, perfectly calm, and reposing in the sun ; this small lake was formed by the arrested current of a silver stream, which came dancing from a remote source along a gently inclining valley on a height bordered by higher hills, all pointed and jagged against the sky. The valley, hanging as it were in air, extended very far into the distance and was lost amongst the meeting snow-covered mountains which closed the vista.

They advanced for a considerable distance along this vale, fording in many places the shallow stream which had lately broken its bounds and had, only a few days before, shattered all the little wooden bridges along its course. Every here and there it formed itself into jets and waterfalls, and covered them with spray as they passed ; at last the guide's warning voice bade them return, for the peaks of the rocks behind them were beginning to be veiled in clouds, and a low growl along the valley announced the rising of the wind.

A small rain now descended, and they turned to retrace their steps and soon reached the gallery from whence the finest view of the fall is obtained : they began the perilous-looking descent, which threatened to become really so in consequence of the slippery masses of rock they had to cross,

down which the rain now poured in a suddenly loosened torrent, while every rock and peak re-echoed to the instantaneously awakened thunder.

The guide recommended their sheltering themselves for a time till the first fury of the storm was spent, in a hollowed part of the rock, usually employed at similar moments by the workmen, and here they all crouched down, endeavouring to screen themselves from the blasts which came whistling and howling down the black abyss, urging the white-crested waters to still more desperate leaps amongst the impeding crags.

The cry of a vulture was heard above them, and its dismal scream was repeated by every cavern; the guide turned round to Claudia, who stood close to him and exclaimed—

"That cry tells of a death—the Lämmergeyer never cries but when some soul departs—he is always an ill-omened bird."

Claudia shrunk back and, impressed with sudden terror, threw herself into Clara's arms and burst into tears. They all pressed round her soothing and exhorting her to have courage, for the danger was nothing, and she recovered her spirits almost instantly.

"I am not frightened at the storm," she said, "but a sudden horror came over me. Let

us go on—it is better to face the rain than to stay in this hideous cavern—it smells like a grave.”

“ You are not afraid of Barbarossa and all his knights, are you ?” said Count Altheim, wishing to change her thoughts: “ he is said at times to make excursions in these mountains, and is heard, not seen, for he and his court are all imprisoned during the existence of the present world, beneath the Untersberg, which we passed from Salzburg ; it is believed that their subterranean hunting-grounds extend for leagues, and the cries of their dogs and the sound of their horses’ hoofs can be distinctly heard at times, and probably at this moment in this very spot.”

By the time they had reached the last slippery step of the ravine the transient storm was over ; the raving of the wind had ceased, a bright rainbow was spanning the valley below, and they re-entered their carriage and drove back to Berchtesgaden by one of the softest and most lovely afternoons they had had since their arrival.

CHAPTER IX.

Alack, alack for woe,
That any harm should stain so fair a show !

Richard II.

IN the midst of the paradise of Lake Como lies the promontory of Balbiano, crowned with what seem temples that might well be dedicated to the fairest goddess that Grecian imagination could create ; they are, however, only villas which fortunate individuals can inhabit "for a consideration," and it was one of these that was possessed by Mr. Luttrell, but had been long neglected since the death of his wife, who had been fond of the beautiful retreat and spent many of her solitary hours there.

It had lately been newly arranged and repaired, and the villa appeared in all the attractions of newly chiseled marble, newly suspended draperies

and newly decorated gardens, full of statues and flowers. Nothing could exceed the charming aspect presented therefore, when on a bright morning of early autumn a boat from Colico, at the further end of the lake, brought the travellers to the marble steps of their palace-like villa.

A whole grove of roses, mixing with clematis and orange-flowers, waved a welcome with their perfumed arms as they twined round the dazzling white colonnades, through which the sisters and their party passed to the open marble hall, where they paused in admiration at its grace and lightness.

The first words of Claudia as she entered and looked around her, were—

“ Dear papa ! how kind of him to have all so beautifully arranged for us ! How happy we shall all be here ! ”

She had scarcely spoken when a servant approached and presented a letter to Sir Anselm, which he opened at once, recognising the hand of Mr. Loftus ; as he read it the expression of his countenance changed, and he became very pale. Instead of following the young ladies, who had hurried into the open chambers which formed a vista from the hall, he turned hastily round and ordered his servant to detain the boat which had

brought them from the steamer, as he required it to row instantly to Como.

Clara had observed his agitation on reading the letter, and had lingered behind her pupils, who had now disappeared with Count Altheim into the furthest chamber, which opened to a terrace overlooking the lake on the other side.

"What has occurred Sir Anselm?" exclaimed she; "some bad news, I fear—you look distressed."

"My dear Miss Fane," replied he, "I fear something unfortunate has happened to Mr. Luttrel, in Paris. Edmond Loftus and Lord Clairmont wait to see me at Como. The few words contained in this note are alarming. Prepare those poor children to hear of their father's illness—accident—I know not what. I must hasten to ascertain the truth, and will return as speedily as possible."

So saying he pressed her hand, crushed the note into his pocket and hastening down the steps was instantly in a boat, whose rowers were exerting the greatest activity to bear him on towards Como.

The sisters had, meanwhile, been flying from terrace to terrace, and had reached a little marble temple about half-way down the declivity of the gardens, where they suddenly paused in surprise

as the boat in which they recognised Sir Anselm shot past the point, near which they stood.

“What can Sir Anselm mean by quitting us at once!” exclaimed Claudia, “look Sybilla, his head rests on his hand as if he was thinking deeply—he does not look towards us—how strange!”

“He is doubtless going to Como in your service,” said Count Altheim, “it is not far, and he will be returned by the time your extacies are past.”

“Oh,” cried Sybilla, “mine will never end while we stay in this enchanting spot. Look at the myrtles and pomegranates, the oranges and the trellises of grapes—the jasmines and the waving acacias—like our gardens at Fulham; but then how much more lovely this blue sky is, and this sweet lake, and all the snow mountains shining in the sun. Oh, Count Altheim, shouldn’t you like to live here with us?—do ask your mamma to come and see us, and you can bring her. I should like everyone we love to be here.”

Altheim blushed redder than the pomegranate flowers, and his hand trembled as he gathered a rose and presented it. At that moment Clara came up to them and they flew to meet her. Her face was so grave and sad that they both stopped and looked wistfully at her for a moment, but the

excitement of their spirits prevented their attributing her gravity to anything but fatigue.

"Poor darling," said Claudia, "she is tired after the long journey—we shall have plenty of time to enjoy all this—I will go with you and act housekeeper directly and put you comfortably into your room—it shall be the prettiest there is in the whole villa, and we will fix on papa's and our own."

"Yes, come with me, dear Claudia," said Clara, "and let us be grave and calm: the brightest suns in the world may become clouded, and we must never trust to their brilliancy nor suffer ourselves to be carried away by the sense of enjoyment. Recollect, that we know not but that, at this moment, some person not far from us, in one of these lovely villages of palaces, may be suffering from sickness, may require aid, and is there to prove that there is no such thing as happiness on earth."

"Have you heard of anyone suffering?" said Claudia, as they walked through the suite of rooms which she now scarcely regarded, "you look so grave."

"I am uneasy not to find letters from your papa," said Clara, "that makes me serious perhaps. I thought he would have written to welcome you here."

"Oh, that's nothing," replied Claudia, "you know he is incorrigible for that: but what has Sir Anselm gone away for—he does not mean to go off to Milan without saying good bye?"

"No," said Clara, "he received some news that distressed him, and is gone to Como at once to hear it confirmed."

"Poor Sir Anselm!" cried Claudia, "I hope there is nothing bad—he has no near relations, I think, to hear ill news of, but he is so kind to everyone he would be shocked if any of his friends were ill."

"Lord Clairmont and Mr. Loftus are at Como," said Clara, "I think it is they who want to see him."

"Lord Clairmont!" exclaimed Claudia, with a blush, and turning a little away, "how singular that we should see him so soon," then, as if a sudden thought had struck her she clapped her hands and cried out, "you are preparing a surprise for us! I see it now—papa is with them! Sir Anselm is gone to fetch him—they will return together!"

Clara could scarcely retain her tears as she faltered—"Dearest Claudia, you are mistaken—I fear you will not meet at present—Mr. Luttrell is not well, he has had some slight accident, I believe, in Paris—he cannot come yet."

Claudia stood suddenly still and looked at Clara with a face of anxiety.

"Do you know that he is ill, dear Miss Fane, tell me all—tell me—"

She could not finish her speech, but burst into tears.

Clara embraced her tenderly, and endeavoured to comfort her.

"As yet," said she, "I know nothing positive, I fear some ill news awaits Sir Anselm, and I wish you to be prepared to hear it calmly. This is the time to prove to me that you can act with resolution, and are no longer the careless child you were when I first knew you. Your sister is more like what you were then, and may require your support in case of our hearing bad news: the sorrows of some of us begin almost in our infancy, we must endeavour to meet them as becomes reasonable beings and be patient sufferers."

"Oh!" sobbed Claudia, "there is something dreadful to be known I am sure—shall we tell poor little Sybilla yet? what shall we do?"

"We will join her," said Clara, "and take an opportunity of letting her know that something is the matter. It grieved me to check your gay spirits at such a happy moment, but we must not

let her be taken by surprise either, if there is really bad news in store."

When they returned to the garden they found Sybilla sitting, crowned with roses which Count Altheim had been gathering and weaving into a garland for her luxuriant hair. He was laughing joyously, and the merry voice of his interesting companion echoed through the grove of cypresses in which they sat, the dark branches throwing a broad deep shadow on the path beneath, whilst roses were twined round every stem and hung in festoons amongst the sombre green.

It was a hard task to Clara to break the spell of pleasure which surrounded the pair; but when she intimated her fears of Mr. Luttrell's illness the flowers fell from the hands of Sybilla, and an uneasy gloom took possession of her lately cheerful countenance. The whole party, therefore, returned to the house saddened and sorrowful, and passed all the beautiful objects which had so lately excited their admiration, without a glance of notice.

To look from the windows and the terraces for the arrival of the boat from Como, was now the sole employ of all, and it was not long before the approach of the steamer told that their friends were near. A boat was waiting in the middle of

the lake to receive Sir Anselm, who they observed to part with two other gentlemen, and the steamer continued its usual voyage, while Sir Anselm drew to shore.

That first evening, at beautiful Como, was passed in tears and agonised regrets; for, by degrees, the truth was disclosed to the orphans, although the manner of their father's death was concealed from them. They understood that he had died in consequence of an accident, and their feelings were spared the shock of knowing that he fell in a duel.

Claudia heard, after a few days, with more interest than she had yet shown in anything since the fatal news, that Lord Clairmont had been with Mr. Luttrell at his death, and had heard his last words and anxiety about his children. She appeared to receive some consolation from this circumstance, and his name in future created a lively feeling of gratitude in her mind; she promised soon to see him and hear his account of her father's last moments, and, by degrees, she became more calm. The shock was greatly felt by Sybilla, who was taken very ill and required so much attendance and care, that both her sister and Clara were fully occupied in their present anxiety for her.

Sir Anselm left them, after a time, to follow

Count Altheim, who was already gone to Milan, and Clara and her changed pupils remained in their beautiful and now lonely solitude, depressed and sorrowing. Clara had received letters from Vienna in answer to those which had informed Lady Seymour of the catastrophe, in which that lady's expressions of grief were vehement and full of affection ; she was, she said, so overwhelmed by the news that she found it impossible to travel for some time, but would hasten to throw herself into the arms of her beloved nieces the moment her doctors gave her assurance that her life was not endangered by following the dictates of her feelings.

Clara felt relieved by this intimation which promised them an interval of quiet repose, more likely to restore their minds to a calmer tone ; for she felt sure that the presence of their aunt would be no real balm to their wounded hearts.

Sir Anselm, whom Mr. Luttrell had named guardian to his children, considered it best that his original intention should be carried out, and that they should remain at Como for some time at least as a home, with Clara for their protectress, and as he had a villa of his own on the lake where he could be in their neighbourhood, he resolved to inhabit it.

There was much in this scheme which offered satisfaction to his mind ; he felt that he had now an object of great interest, and that he could in future devote himself to guard and protect these two interesting girls, for whom he every day became more anxious and for whom his attachment continued to increase. Their fortunes were very considerable, and on the score of means he had no anxiety ; he saw plainly also that the young Marquis was attached to Claudia, and that his new found connexion, Count Altheim, had a romantic *penchant* for the young Sybilla. At present, the extreme youth of both sisters precluded the possibility of either of these matches taking place ; but the prospect was fair before him, and he entertained no fears for their future establishment. His customary love of the smooth and easy side of events was therefore gratified, and his thoughts dwelt with pleasing calmness on the years to come, which he might in a great measure direct.

There was one person to whom he was particularly desirous to do something useful, but his sense of delicacy made it a difficult business to accomplish. He had convinced himself of the excellence and goodness of Clara Fane's character, and he lamented that she should be entirely de-

pendant on the precarious existence which her talents procured for her.

“When these girls marry,” thought he, “she has only to look forward to some new situation where, perhaps, she will meet with hardships with which she is unfitted to struggle. She has courage and firmness, and would resign herself to any fate, but it is sad that she should be exposed to endure a hard one, with all her fine and valuable qualities. Yet, how to obviate this?—Lady Seymour is the only female with whom I am in any communication respecting her, and it would be useless to expect sympathy or interest from her. I should fear to alarm her delicacy if I made any mention of a provision for her, either from her pupils or myself: the children are too young to enter into my views, and she would be aware that the proposal emanated from me.”

This generous wish, though repressed, he was not able to abandon, and was continually forming plans to accomplish. It was with this view that he occasionally talked to Clara about herself, and led her to speak of her past life and its vicissitudes. Finding that he entered with extreme interest into all that she was induced to relate from time to time, she became accustomed to his enquiries and at length even named the inci-

dents of which Mr. Loftus formed a part, her version of which, although he knew them from Edmond himself, he yet heard with pleasure.

While listening to her he continually reproached himself for a certain carelessness in his own conduct, which he now saw was doubly wrong as it had led Mr. Loftus into acts which might have injured her.

"I am the more to blame," said he, "since I had undertaken to cure him of failings which my supineness, in some respects, did not sufficiently check. I almost wonder that you have forgiven me so generously, since I am, in fact, the first cause of the undue familiarity he assumed in his original acquaintance with you. He is, however, quite humbled now, and will never intrude himself on your presence again unless by your especial permission, so much so that he has absented himself from us now and has left Clairmont, who remains at the hotel at Como, waiting till our young friends are sufficiently recovered for it to be advisable that they should see him. When Edmond returns, which he probably will do before very long, as he promises to come to me on the lake, I hope you will feel sufficient confidence in him to permit him to see you: he is quite incapable of vexing you by any silly disguise in future, which could answer no purpose. The

death of Mr. Luttrel has made a great impression on him, as well as the loss which his poor *protégé* Wybrow has experienced, and he is more inclined to see the world in its right light, without expecting too much from it or depreciating its good."

"When Mr. Loftus returns," said Clara, "I have not the slightest wish to be a check on him. I only desire to remain indifferent to him as I now am, and shall not venture to object to his visits here if you think them proper. I do not feel unprotected now that you are acquainted with all my history," she added, smiling, "and I can, I know, always appeal to you if necessary."

CHAPTER X.

Beside me were dark waters,
In broad canals and deep,
Whereon the silver moon-beams
Lay, restless in their sleep.

Hood.

EDMOND LOFTUS, after parting with the young Marquis at Como, proceeded on his way to Venice, where he proposed passing a little time. He took up his abode on the Grand Canal at an hotel near the Rialto, and from thence made continual excursions in that dreamy manner common to the inhabitants of the city of the sea. Without exertion, reclined on cushions in a shaded gondola, sometimes reading, sometimes contemplating, he glided along the palace-girt canals into the open sea-lakes out of which rise those fairy islands so beautiful at a distance and so ruinous on a near approach.

Day after day he indulged in this summer

existence, for storms were far away and perfect calm reigned throughout the watery region, enlivened occasionally by a fresh breeze which changed the colour of the waves from deep blue to lively green, and crested them with dancing foam or sent them sparkling over the marble steps of the palaces along the shore.

His thoughts were of a mixed character, the sad circumstance of Maria's death and the consequent sorrow it would bring upon his friend Wybrow, pressed heavily on his mind : the sudden catastrophe of Luttrel, cut off in the midst of a licentious career, saddened him not a little. On Sir Anselm he could always reflect with satisfaction.

"He is a man," he said to himself, "whose whole occupation is alleviating the pains of others : he saw the character of Luttrel, and felt that his children were but little protected by him, he therefore undertook the pleasing task of watching over them, and without appearing to dictate in anything, contrived to accomplish his benevolent object. He has taken equal interest in Clara Fane. Why am I so wayward as to follow a different course, why can I not, like him, extract honey from poison ? he would not be disgusted by the character of Luttrel so much as to neglect a self-imposed duty, and he has proved the judici-

ousnesss of his proceeding, now that he can really act as a father to these interesting girls. He looks on Clara as perfection, and I believe him to be right. But the nearer I approach to this conviction the farther am I from benefiting by it. She contemns and despises me—even Sir Anselm is obliged to acknowledge that he believes her to be indifferent to me, and indifference is the worst difficulty to overcome. I have ruined my hopes by an overweening opinion of my own powers: now I distrust myself and am altogether dispirited. I will, however, return to her vicinity—I will stay with Sir Anselm at Como and trust to chance for assistance, for I cannot repress the affection so suddenly conceived for her, so much tried and so pertinaciously retained, in spite of even her coldness. I have mistaken her and myself. I have mistaken the nature of real love and I now wake to know my error.

“To admire the beautiful and the true, as they should be admired, we should begin, as in religion, by faith; before we approach the altar we ought to examine ourselves to prove that we possess the proper elements which render us worthy to be accepted as votaries; true love demands scrupulous respect and unbounded devotion, I have been but a pretender. I have clung to theo-

ries and have wanted trust—I have been presumptuous and frivolous instead of steady and patient. I have thought that lightness, caprice and daring would stand in stead of solid virtues.

“Some women would have been won by the romance, which seemed to give *éclat* to such a conquest; but I have been mistaking, all this while, the goddess herself for one of her wandering nymphs, who might be pursued with impunity.

“Thus we sport with the advantages offered us, and in the end become beggars! Let me repair, if I may, the fault of too much confidence.

“Should I not be happy now if Clara were by my side in this gondola—if we were gliding on together through these tranquil waters—our world within ourselves? This might have been mine, but for a waywardness which I could not control. I ought to have seen from the first that she was all I could desire or imagine: I saw in her simplicity without art, an amiable confidence which suspected no guile, but was startled at the discovery of its existence: I experienced her pity, her patience, her resolution: I watched her steady course of duty and propriety—yet I dared to suspect her still, only from the careless word of a man whose principles I already knew, and who has now expiated his faults so fatally.

"With me caprice and fantasy, and their light and dangerous graces have too long overcome firm principles ; I was unable to appreciate the good I professed to seek, and I have perhaps done,

'Like the base Judean, thrown a pearl away
Richer than all his tribe.'

It is not—it shall not be too late. I will make one effort more ; the prize is worth the struggle.

"The pure and innocent, and timid love of young Clairmont has shamed me of mine. With him the lovely child Claudia is a divinity, whose shrine he approaches with trembling : no thoughts find place in his heart but those which tend to exalt her, and he rises himself the more he elevates his idol. Alas ! on the contrary, we usually seek to bring the object of our pursuit down to our base level. We should, instead of holding the young in contempt, seek to imitate them—we grow old too soon : we should believe as youth believes, and we might be young in age, and hope even without indulging in too many delusions.

"Am I not young also ?—younger than Petrarch, when he gave up his soul to the idea of Laura ; and, whatever commentators may say the love of Petrarch, was not more ideal than my own—perhaps not more pure. If he had never

offended Laura by his pretensions, why does she address reproaches to him—had he not ventured too far, relying on her love for him, would she have arrested him with the words he himself reports her to have uttered—‘I am not such as you imagine me.’

“But Laura, though for a time offended, did not overwhelm him with her anger or indifference; she exercised the indulgence of a gentle mind; she could accord him nothing as a lover, but she could love him as a friend. I am in a better position than Petrarch, provided that in the heart of her I seek there is a fountain of ever springing tenderness for me, such as the most hopeless and consequently most pure of lovers found ready to refresh and support him in the struggle of his life.

“She resisted, she granted nothing, but—she forgave! Clara has, perhaps, less to forgive than Laura, and I have more to hope.”

One day, as he was indulging in such reveries, totally unconscious of all that was passing around him, a sudden shock of his gondola startled him from his trance of reflection, and the loud and angry cries of his boatmen and those belonging to another gondola, caused him to rouse himself to know the cause.

All the invectives in which the Venetian dia-

lect is so rich were at this moment employed on both sides, and something more than words seemed likely to ensue without an interposing authority. One voice raised in anger betrayed a foreign accent, and Loftus, on looking towards the speaker, observed a black man in the usual dress of the gondolieri, vehemently expostulating with his own rowers.

"This is not the first time you have tried this," exclaimed the black boatman in Venetian, "but rest assured you will never succeed in overturning my boat. I know you well, I know the great sea itself and your little paltry canals into the bargain too well, to let myself be conquered by any of you, though you herd against me because I am the best rower and the best man amongst you and, thank God, not a wretched, cowardly Venetian."

"What is this?" cried Loftus, "why am I thus interrupted?—is the canal not broad enough for us all but you must run foul of us in the very centre?"

"It is false, signor," said the black, "your people deceive you if they dare to say it. They never lose an occasion of insulting me, and scarce a day passes but they try to run down my boat—because I am a foreigner and they choose to say I have no business here."

"Is this the case?" asked Loftus of his men, amused at the altercation.

"To be sure it is, Excellenza," was the reply, "and we will never cease till we have driven him from the canal. He had no right here and he gets all our fares from us because he has got the name of a good rower."

"And I deserve it," vociferated the black, "and I can row in the open seas too where you fear to go, and could beat any of you at your own weapons in a fair fight any day, though I am not a match for you as an assassin. You have stabbed me and tried to drown me, and persecuted me, but I defy you all."

So saying, the gallant black resumed his seat, and giving a stroke with his oar, which covered them with spray, he darted triumphantly past, followed by the shouts of fury of his opponents.

"Who is this fellow?" asked Loftus, when he had ceased laughing.

"His name is Cristoforo," replied one of the boatmen, "he came here some months ago and set himself up on the canal, after building his own boat, and he wants to interfere with our craft and get our business away. Because he can sing and dance and do a thousand fooleries, he is a favourite at the hotels, and manages to pick up a better living than we do: we take care and keep

him from our hotel, and we all hate him in a body."

"That's very unfair," said Loftus, "he has as much right to exert his industry as you have. I cannot approve of this injustice."

The next day, when it was time to set out on the usual lounging watery stroll, to the great annoyance of the former *employés*, the valet of Mr. Loftus had ordered the gondola of Cristofero to be at the hotel stairs. When Edmond descended he had to face a host of angry men, who were crowding round and abusing the black rower who sat unmoved as a statue in his boat, occasionally rolling his large eyes round, with a comic expression and with a grin on his mouth, which displayed his dazzling teeth to perfection.

Mr. Loftus descended the stairs and stepped into his new gondola, while the malcontents went off muttering and mortified.

"The signor," said the black in good English, as soon as he had rowed some distance, "comes from a country where injustice is not thought right, and he takes part with the poor foreigner: may he be rewarded for it. I have done them no harm, but they are ignorant wicked ones and jealous of me because I am a gentleman to them —savages as they are."

"Are you a gentleman, Cristofero?" said Loftus, "perhaps a king in your own country?"

The black smiled good-humouredly.

"I might be," said he, "but I never knew it, for I was a piccaninny when they took me away from my own land. I am a free man and that is as good, and yet I have had as much slavery as most people too. I was wrecked at sea seventeen years ago, and from that day till about two years since I have been trying to escape in vain, falling from one slavery into another, and only getting out of one bad scrape to get into a worse. I have an unlucky star that's the truth, but there is the Good One above after all, and he wont let me suffer always. He has sent you, signor, and he will help me yet before I die."

"Where, then, have you been these seventeen years?" enquired Loftus.

"Always work, work," replied Cristofero, "always in slavery from the time I was picked up for dead on a reef of rocks, where I might as well have stayed to be washed off by the sea, as been saved by a slaver. I was carried to Maragnan and sold to a cotton merchant there, who was a hard man, very rich, and always talking of liberty for others, like the Yankees, while he kept a tight hand over his own slaves."

"He had been in England, and, as I was an Englishman or all the same, he employed me to be his secretary to write to London merchants after a time; but he treated me none the better for it, always kicking and beating me, and treating me like a dog. I did him much service and he found I was useful, so he took me with him to Rio and there he made me a household servant. He was very fond of money, and being offered a large sum for me he sold me to a Chilian, and I was taken off with him. This master was worse than the first, and because I tried to escape from his tyranny he sent me to the mines.

"That's a fearful life, signor," continued the black, "and I bless my stars and the great Providence that watches over me that I got away from that, but not for several years. I managed to hide myself on board a vessel bound to France, but was wrecked off *terra del Fuego*, and there when I got ashore I fell into bad hands again, and passed some more wretched years: from one cruel master to another I have continually passed, till at length I escaped on board a Sicilian vessel and worked my way in her to Europe. I got brought at last to Venice, where I fell sick and was for months in the hospital, where they were good to me and I recovered. Since then I have tried to support myself by plying on the canal,

but a troublesome life of it I have, used as I am to struggling and striving, and I grow old now and not so strong and able as I was years ago."

"Would you like a permanent service?" asked Loftus, interested in the story he listened to, "if you are honest and faithful I will employ you, and you shall go with me when I leave Venice."

Cristofero rested on his oars with a smile of intense satisfaction as he heard this proposition, much too advantageous to be rejected.

"I ask nothing better," said he, "take me and try me, and if I prove worthless cast me into the sea, where I ought to have perished long ago."

He said this in a tone of so much emotion that Loftus was struck with it.

"Why ought you to have perished?" said he, "what necessity was there for such a sacrifice?"

"Master," said the black, with energy, "let it be a compact between us, never to speak of that—it is my horror—it is my misery—it pursues me and makes me mad. I used to indulge in it, now I try to forget that which crushed all my life into one groan: I have expiated the fault of that moment by seventeen years of wretchedness. My bad star rose from the black waters then, now it has sunk down into that desolate wave for ever,

and the good one rises for me—I can see it in your eyes."

"You shall find it shine according to your deserts," replied Loftus, "we have every man his sorrow, and each should respect that of his fellow. Fear not, we shall be good friends. I ask honesty and faithful service, and am not used to slaves. You will not have a hard place."

From that day Cristofero, as he continued to be called, being known by that name at Venice, ceased to be an object of detestation to the *gondolieri*, with whom he no longer interfered in their public occupation. On the contrary, he was enabled to be their patron on more than one occasion, as his new master afforded him many opportunities of becoming popular. He was the dispenser of his bounty to the poor of his order, and in executing the commissions given him by Loftus he showed so noble and generous a spirit of benevolence that his favour grew daily, and from an object of derision and dislike, no one was now so great a favourite as Cristofero il Nerone.

When not employed in his gondola, which, being peculiarly well made and convenient, Loftus had bought, he might be seen sitting on the marble steps of the hotel, singing song after song with a humour and gaiety which attracted round him the listening boatmen, who would join

in a joyous chorus at the end of his strain, much to the amusement of his master, who loved to listen to the cheerful sounds as he sat in a shaded balcony hanging over the canal.

He found, in fact, that in more than one instance, Cristofero was a great acquisition in his establishment: he was an excellent interpreter and was of signal use to his French valet, whose Italian was not very fluent, and who was, like most of his countrymen, too conceited to learn; he could play the guitar as well as a Spaniard, could sing Brazilian love songs and English ballads; he could dance the bolero and an Irish jig, and could tell histories of "hair-breadth 'scapes" as well as the best story teller at Venice.

Added to these accomplishments, he was extremely good natured and obliging, and ready to lend a helping hand to any one—even to many of those who had been least friendly on former occasions. His gratitude to his new master knew no bounds; he was never weary of singing and speaking his praises, and he professed his resolution to live and die for him if need were.

A proof of his sincerity he gave in his extreme gratitude to the good brothers of the hospital, who had attended him during his severe illness: he induced Loftus to go with him to visit the establishment, and showed him the ward in which

he had slept and introduced him to the brother who had watched him. A liberal donation to the charity made both those benevolent men happy, but filled the heart of Cristofero with exultation and delight. No sooner did he see his friends at Venice, after their visit, than he proclaimed his master's kindness and drew upon him so much popularity that it threatened to become inconvenient.

He was, therefore, desired by Loftus to keep this sort of transaction secret for the future, in order to avert the applications of every pauper in the city, and it was with the utmost difficulty that his enthusiastic follower kept the ardour of his gratitude in any bounds.

CHAPTER XI.

—
for, look, thy cheeks
Confess it, one to the other. Speak, is 't so ?

All's Well that Ends Well.

SOME weeks had now elapsed since the news of their father's death had been communicated to the sisters, and Sir Anselm thought that the Marquis, who was staying with him at a villa he had hired at Varennna, might be allowed to pay his respects. He was, accordingly, admitted, and Claudia had the melancholy satisfaction of hearing from him the brief, but interesting, account of her father's solicitude respecting them at the last. Clairmont had no easy task to ward off the inquiries addressed to him as to the manner of Luttrel's death, which he was forced to attribute to an accident while shooting.

The kind and tender manner in which he listened to their lamentations, and his soothing words, quite succeeded in impressing Claudia with the highest opinion of his goodness of heart, and

Clara saw, with pleasure, that his society was a means of consolation to her wounded spirit.

Knowing Sir Anselm's wishes on the subject, and aware that they were those of Mr. Luttrell himself, she judged that it was best to permit the intimacy to increase, and Lord Clairmont accordingly became a constant visitor at the villa at Balbiano.

Sir Anselm now announced to them his intentions of absenting himself for a short time at Milan.

"When I return," said he, "I hope to bring with me my sister-in-law, the Countess Altheim, whom I am endeavouring to persuade to pass the winter with me on the Lake: they assure me that at Varenna the cold is scarcely felt, and as she is in delicate health the climate I trust will restore her. I shall look to you for much care and attention for her, and am sure I may promise it. If," he added, turning to Clara, "another visitor should arrive in my absence, or when I return I should bring him with me, I have to beg you to extend your politeness to Mr. Loftus."

"Oh!" exclaimed Claudia, with something of her old gaiety, "we shall have a difficult business then, for poor Mr. Loftus is one of Miss Fane's antipathies—she never could bear to hear us name him—she disliked him as much as she did Clark;

but perhaps she will take to adoring him as she ended by doing that much injured individual."

"Lady Seymour, attended by that worthy," said Sir Anselm, "will, I find, soon arrive at Venice, on their way here; probably Loftus will be their escort, so that we shall shortly be a large party on our lake."

Sir Anselm, leaving the necessary directions for the reception of his expected visitors, accordingly departed, and Clara and her pupils were left in their beautiful solitude, broken only by daily visits from Lord Clairmont, who usually arrived early in the morning, and returned to Varenna in the evening: sometimes they rowed on the lake, sometimes landed and explored some of the charming vallies, and all that could be devised to amuse and calm the spirits of the orphan sisters was resorted to with a tender solicitude which did not lose its reward, for the light hearts of youth are more easily led from brooding over sorrows than is possible in later life, when, if oblivion of grief is obtained in the course of time, it is at the sacrifice of a portion of intellectual life, which, following the loved and lost, leaves the mourner so much nearer the grave, over which his mind hovers. Every tear gives an additional year of age—every pang robs the heart of a part of its vitality. Oh, tears and grief! blessed are

ye, then—for ye reduce the load and render the painful journey we must run the shorter.

Sir Anselm had been gone about ten days when Clara received a letter from him, mentioning that he was in hopes soon to return, with Count Altheim and his mother, but that he waited till the latter felt well enough to leave the physician at Milan, in whom she had confidence.

“Mr. Loftus,” he wrote, “will arrive here almost directly—he will send some of his people on to Varennia to wait for him there; it is not impossible that he will see you all before me, as I do not like to hurry Madame Altheim, who is, however, delighted in the prospect of being my guest and your neighbour. I find her sadly changed in the course of these long, sad years; but the same in spirit, and almost painfully like her whose memory I cherish so fondly—you will I am sure be great friends—there is a resemblance in your minds, as well in your aspects, for the singular likeness I spoke of strikes me even more forcibly in her. This, of course, is merely the effect of sympathy, that mysterious power which unites the absent and distant, and can transform even feature at its will. Fanciful as it is, I do not object to indulge in the belief in its existence, let it be called mesmerism or what you will, certain it is that it affects only particular persons, and

is null with others, like the effect of music, electric to a sensitive ear, and mute to one that is dull."

Clara pleased herself in the anticipation of seeing this new acquaintance.

" My lot is singular," thought she ; " entirely dependant, deprived of position or connexions, I find myself, without exertion of my own, placed in a sphere to which it would seem I belong, so completely does everything give way to afford me advantage. Even this sad catastrophe of the death of Mr. Luttrel tends to relieve me from the fear of annoyance, and the unexampled kindness of Sir Anselm promises me uninterrupted protection. These children are become to me as dear as if I were nearly related to them, and they cling to me with an affection which claims all mine in return. One regret, nevertheless, attends me. Why am I so weak as to dwell still on the thought of Mr. Loftus ?—why do I allow myself to wish that he had acted differently, and felt for me really the attachment that he feigned ? Of course when he quitted me last, with the disguise he had assumed, he threw off all the inclination which he might have felt. He was mortified and disgusted with himself; no doubt he altogether believed that the severity and coldness with which I deemed it right to act, were genuine, and that he had no place in my regard.

"When we see no emotions in another answering to our own, the heart is thrown back upon itself and becomes chilled and insensible, and as love is the cause of love, so is indifference the parent of indifference. Would that the efforts of my reason were sufficient to subdue this feeling of preference for him, which can tend only to destroy that tranquillity which I might now feel. These words—perhaps merely written for effect—but so effective!—which Claudia read to me to-day with so much feeling in the charming letters of Madame de Sevigné, I understood too well:—‘*Je ne comprends pas comme on peut tant penser à une personne ; n'aurai je jamais tout pensé ?—non—que quand je ne penserai plus !*’”

She sat mournfully leaning from the balcony which hung over the lake and looked out upon the calm waters and the distant snow-crowned mountains rising, as it were, from its bosom, and her mind, abstracting itself from all around, framed its aspiration into passionate words like these:—

I guide my wandering thoughts away
From all that leads them back to thee ;
That when I turn my mind to pray
Thou mayest not in my vigils be.
For wert thou but a moment there,
So weak I know my heart would prove,
Whatever might begin my prayer,
Twould end in asking for thy love.

But we are now so far removed,
And I have striven to forget,
Until the mem'ry that we loved
Has scarcely left me one regret.
I would not roll away the stone
That closed the fountain of my pain,
Lest the deep stream, now silent grown,
Should gush to fatal life again.

Oh! better in the torrent's course
Pile rocks on rocks in ruin wide,
Till, check'd and deadened in its force,
It turn its sullen waves aside.—
The future and its cares unknown,
Let the sad present be my own.

While she sat indulging in these dreams, a boat suddenly came in sight, cleaving the waves with more than usual speed and, as it nearecd, she observed several figures within. It glided swiftly past her balcony, and she received a salutation from a gentleman whom she could not for a moment doubt was no other than the very person of whom she had been thinking, and striving not to think. The boat stopped at the palace-stairs, but a projecting colonnade prevented her seeing whether he had landed. Her uncertainty was, however, soon ended by Sybilla's running into her room, followed by her sister.

“Oh, my dear Miss Fane!” cried she, “only guess who has arrived!—our beloved Mr. Loftus himself, whom we have'nt seen since we were

children. He is not at all changed, though it is quite thrce years, and he pretends to be so shy and afraid to see our governess who he is sure is some dreadful stiff, formal person, that we are determined to show him how mistaken he is. Come with us directly—you will be certain to like him, though you are so unreasonable as to hate his name. I do believe you are jealous because we were always fond of him. How you tremble!—why one would think he was an ogre, going to eat you. Claudia, do make her come, for the poor darling is waiting in the garden till we arrive."

Clara, with a strong effort, recovered herself, and descended the stairs with Claudia, while Sybilla ran before to announce her.

"She is coming, Edmond!" exclaimed she; "but I can't tell you how frightened she is—she can't bear you, and fancies you as bad as you think her."

"Did she say so?" asked Mr. Loftus.

"No, no," returned Sybilla; but she trembled and shook, and turned red and pale as if she expected to be beaten."

At this moment Clara entered. Mr. Loftus advanced towards her with an air of deference, and took her hand.

"Miss Fane," said he, "I am too happy to be

received here by the favourite friend of those so dear to me. I am to announce to you that Lady Seymour will arrive in the course of a week, and the rest of the party soon after;—will you give me hospitality for an hour or two?"

Clara bowed, and with as calm a manner as she could assume replied graciously to this address.

"I was anxious to steal a march on Lady Seymour," he continued, "and to visit my *old* friends before she arrived. I know they hate formality as much as I do, and I hoped by this sudden movement that we might *all* feel like old acquaintances at once. Where is my friend Clairmont? I expected to find him here," he said, looking at Claudia, who blushed and turned away.

"He is later than usual to-day," said she; "but he is sure to come soon—he takes such care of us."

"Happy occupation!" exclaimed Mr. Loftus; "I am, however, come to relieve him, and must have my share in this arduous task. I have such a capital boatman, Claudia; better than the one who used to row us to the Grotte Azuro, at Naples—do you remember?"

"Oh yes, we remember all!" cried Claudia, "and how you used to mimic all the people there,

and act poor Clark for us—he is coming too, isn't he, with Auntie Seymour?"

"Without doubt," said Mr. Loftus; "she could not move if he was not at her elbow: she is giving him lessons in drawing, you know."

"But this boatman—is it the black man in the boat below?" asked Sybilla; "what a good-humoured, laughing face—"

"The same," replied Loftus; "he means to reform the boats on the lake, which he calls tubs, as indeed they are. He has a plan of building one which will put them all into the shade, and as I intend to remain at Como, he will be able to carry his plan into execution. I actually do it to gratify him; he has a model of the boat he means to build, and is always full of inventions, which will amuse you—he can sing and dance, and do all sort of things."

"Oh, I am so glad he is going to stay with us!" cried Sybilla. "I shall run down and talk to him."

She was, accordingly soon engaged in deep conversation with Cristofero, and presently, without veil or bonnet, with her beautiful hair flying in the breeze, she passed the terrace, where the rest of the party stood, gliding swiftly along in the pretty vessel and under the guidance of her new

friend, between whom and herself a cordial familiarity had instantly sprung up.

In a few minutes they were encountered by another boat, and Sybilla returned, bringing Lord Clairmont in triumph. Mr. Loftus and he met in the most affectionate manner, and it was evident that this pleasure was mutual.

That day was passed more cheerfully than any since their arrival at the Lake, for though occasional bursts of grief, on the part of the sisters, caused by sudden reminiscences of their father, interrupted their intercourse for awhile, yet they served but the more to increase the intimate sympathy, which was thus established amongst all parties.

Mr. Loftus' delicacy and forethought in avoiding the necessary introduction to her, which must have been awkward had they met before Lady Seymour, gratified Clara extremely. The simplicity of her pupils was easily deceived by their own preconceived idea that each was unknown to the other, and she thus could be perfectly at her ease when Lady Seymour and Sir Anselm returned.

It was now the business of the two gentlemen to imagine amusements for the sisters and their governess, and prevent the former from falling back into sadness, and their devices seemed to succeed entirely. Not the least amongst the

means they used was the introduction of Cristo-fero, whose ingenuity in trifles was extraordinary, and who was continually inventing something surprising and startling to excite the amusement of his favourites : he professed great love for both Clara and her two pupils, and with his habitual enthusiasm was accustomed to say he would die for them all.

They each congratulated themselves on their conquest, and his raptures not a little entertained them, while his songs were an agreeable variety to the vocal concerts in which they often indulged as they passed their evenings rowing up and down in the most beautiful parts of this most seducing of all charming retreats.

With infinite delight did the sisters listen to his stories of adventure, of which he had a great collection : sometimes they teased him by doubting the marvels he related, and furnished themselves with continual amusement by his vehement assurances that, he never uttered a syllable that was not true.

“ Why,” he would say, “ perhaps when I tell you that our fires in Bermuda are all made of cedar you wont believe me, and that we have little fishes there half dolphin and half horse—you may laugh, but I have got one dried that I can show you ; the little forked tail is scaly like a

fish, and the little head is exactly like a horse's, only no bigger than a child's toy. One of our fishes we call The Angel, and it has scales like the sun—our Blue Fish is like a thing made in silver and dropped from the sky—and our Porgy and Grouper are enough to frighten you to look at, if you like variety. These fish are always swimming and darting about amongst the coral groves at the bottom of the sea, and slipping in and out between the branches of the great sea-fans, that are all purple and white, and glittering under water."

"But how do you know this?" said Sybilla, "except you lived in the sea you could not see it."

Cristofero showed his white teeth as he exclaimed, laughing—

"Ah, Missie, we do almost live in the sea there—you should see the little black children, as soon as they can walk, get into the water and stand on their heads—their black legs sticking up in the air. We can dive almost before we can run, and, as for seeing, a black pilot only steers by his sight; he can see to the bottom of the deep water, which is not like this lake, clear as you call it, but like glass, so that you walk into it without knowing that you are off the sands. Oh! they are lovely islands, if ever there were

any! and, if you once saw them you'd think nothing of this bit of water."

So saying he suspended his oar for awhile, and burst forth into one of his wild songs; the words of which were something like the following.

SONG OF THE SUMMER ISLES.

The Summer Isles—the Summer Isles!

In the chrystal sea

Where tempests be,

You may know them all

By the cedars tall

By the Red-bird's note and the Blue-bird's call.

By the Ground-doves as they run,

Through the pathways in the sun:

By the flowers and shells

And cavern'd cells:

By the coral reefs of danger,

That wreck the wand'ring stranger.

They were found when storms were high,

Tho' they seem as if dropped from the sky.

But ruin is on their shore

And tempests evermore,

And all rocks and shoals they dot the bays,

With as many isles as the year has days!

CHAPTER XII.

Malgré ce ciel, ce beau lieu qui m'enivres
Vivre ainsi c'est languir—c'est attendre de vivre.
Tout mon bonheur ainsi se change en vague ennui!

Lamartine.

LADY SEYMOUR had arrived at Balbiano and was installed in her apartments there. The interval that had elapsed between the period of Mr. Luttrell's death and her meeting with his children having been, she considered, long enough to save her from the annoyance of scenes which might agitate her nerves, and as the sisters felt that the sympathy she affected was not altogether genuine, their meeting with her excited them infinitely less than it would otherwise have done. It is only reciprocal feeling that opens the heart, and where that is silent the fountain of tears is arrested, and makes no movement to destroy the cold barrier which tenderness would melt at once.

This Clara considered infinitely better as it

was, and was thankful to find that every day tended to restore by its tranquillity the tone of her pupils mind. They had many quiet hours together in which, though they could not be won to study, she was able to comfort them in a manner more effective than what can be gleaned by the mere consolations of worldly amusement, and she saw with delight that their minds became strengthened, and their understandings improved, by the methods she adopted to counteract the dangerous examples which had hitherto been their only guide.

The conduct of Mr. Loftus, meanwhile, was all that Clara could wish; he neither sought nor avoided her society, but they always met in company with others, and he never addressed to her a word which could not be heard by all or which alluded in any way to a former acquaintance. The minds of both were more tranquil; but there existed in each a feeling of anxiety known to neither, but shared by both. The attachment, unnamed, thus silently grew, almost to the regret of both.

That this was a dangerous position for them they were each aware; but Clara had no means of avoiding it, and Edmond had not the courage to destroy the happy present which he could not help enjoying.

"The truth will break upon me but too soon," he said; "as we now exist I almost dream that I may be loved by her. If I should seek for the certainty my hopes might perhaps be at once put an end to, and a blank future extend its dreary waste for my heart. I will lull myself in this blissful state of enjoyment and let the storm sleep."

Clara's musings were not dissimilar.

"He has evidently entirely conquered the weakness which led him into such extravagance; he has no love for me now, and requires neither disguise nor subterfuge to conceal the mere common-place interest with which I am regarded. I will endeavour to show him that my heart is perfectly unmoved, and labour to meet him with the same calm carelessness as I observe in him."

But Loftus had miscalculated his powers: the energy and impetuosity of his character had slumbered only to revive with more vigour, and after a time he found this state of feeling intolerable.

"I must know the truth!" he exclaimed: "I will make one effort, and she shall tell me at once whether she loves or contemns me."

It was under the influence of this impatience that they met one evening in their usual excursion on the Lake, and their songs which were

accustomed to wake the moonlight echoes were renewed. Clara's guitar was their only instrument, and she was accustomed to accompany the voices of her pupils and her own to the delight of the attentive listeners who were her companions.

Sybilla had on one occasion consented to keep Lady Seymour company at home, while the others set forth in their boat, and they promised to recompence her devotion by a variety of serenades, as she sat with her compelled companion and the attentive Clark on the terrace overlooking the lake and keeping their boat in view.

The young lovers had given themselves up to the enchantment of the scene, and, seated by each other at the further end of the boat, had left Clara and Mr. Loftus beneath the awning, which was commonly removed when the moonlight appeared, but was still up at the moment. Clara was striking chords at random on the instrument, and seemed scarcely conscious of his presence, abstracting her thoughts, as she was endeavouring to do, from the present.

Suddenly Mr. Loftus said, in an abrupt tone, intended only for her ear—

"Play the air I first heard you sing at Rose Cottage, if you have not forgotten it, or if it is not detestable to you from association."

Clara started; the old manner, reproachful and

severe, was returned, and, while it alarmed her, she felt that it came almost like the voice of an old friend, with something welcome in its anger. She tried to obey his desire, but her hand trembled, her voice faltered, and she gave up the attempt. Edmond Loftus snatched the guitar from her hand, exclaiming—

“ I thought so ; I will revive your memory once more, then let it die away for ever ; these are words I have set to it myself, they suit exactly.”

And, in a clear, low voice, much agitated by emotion, he sang—

Be happy now !—ah, why should I
With unavailing prayers beset thee ?
Or why compel thy memory ?
No !—if thou dost not love—forget me.

Too fatally this heart can tell
What 'tis to hope and to regret thee ;
But, though I prize thy friendship well,
Go !—if thou canst not love—forget me.

I'd rather be within thy heart
A stranger, as when first I met thee,
Than but with others share a part—
No !—do not strive to love—forget me.

I've bowed my soul, nor will repine
To learn the task by fortune set me ;
A happier lot might have been mine,
But, no !—thou dost not love—forget me.

The song, although exclusively addressed to the ear of Clara, attracted the attention of the others.

"What a beautiful air," exclaimed Claudia, "but I do not like the words, nor the way in which you sing them, Mr. Loftus; one would think you were angry with some one, you utter the notes so passionately."

"Am I not a good actor?" said Loftus; "I assume the character of an offended lover well, at any rate, since you thought me in earnest."

"Mr. Loftus acts so well," said Clara, "that, for my own part, I find a difficulty in discovering when he is assuming a character, and when he is in earnest."

"You should hear him mimic Clark," said Claudia, laughing, "you could not know them apart."

"I would prefer Mr. Loftus keeping to his own character," said Clara.

"Now, Edmond," said Claudia, "do sing something else, to do away with the disagreeable impressions of that last song—or, stop—give me the guitar, I will give you one Miss Fane is always singing when alone; one would think she was in love, the words are so tender, and the music is her own. You shall hear; and tell me,

Lord Clairmont, if you do not think it somewhat suspicious.”

With an arch look, she took the instrument, and, accompanying herself with peculiar grace, sang as follows—

I've seen thee weep when I have wept,
And smile so sweetly when I smiled,
That for awhile my sorrows slept,
And hope my wakened heart beguiled.

I've seen the bright tear in thine eye
When I have spoken words of woe;
I've heard thy gentle, pitying sigh,
Like winds o'er withered flowers that blow :

And as those winds have power to steal
From faded leaves a perfume yet,
Thy pity roused my soul to feel
Reviving pleasure 'midst regret.

And shall I teach this heart to fear
That I am nothing now to thee?
That others—many—are more dear—
My dream destroyed, and thou still free!

That hour, apart from all the rest,
Given up to me, and me alone,
Why should its memory make me blest?—
The vision shone—it fades—'tis gone!

“Who shall say the authoress of such words is not an actress,” said Mr. Loftus, rather contemptuously, “because it is not likely that Miss

Fane feels a syllable that she has expressed so well."

"All authors are actors for the time," said Clara, "they work themselves into enthusiasm on the subject they choose, and they express themselves well or ill, like a good or bad actor, according to the genius they possess. But as for these lines they owe all to the talent of her who sang them now, from any other lips they would fall meaningless."

"Do you wish to madden me by so much coldness?" exclaimed Loftus in an under tone, as he leant forward as if removing the awning from the boat to let the full flood of moonlight fall upon them.

"I do not—I cannot understand you," returned Clara.

"If you wished it you could," replied he in the same tone, "consent to hear me for a few minutes—let me speak to you once, for the last time. Let me see you to-morrow alone: you hold my fate in your hands. Do not reply—I will not be denied this request: it will be my last."

These were the burried words with which Loftus took leave of Clara that evening, and there was something so earnest and impassioned in his manner that she had not courage, even if he had

left her opportunity, to reply. They landed at the palace steps, and he rowed away in the moonlight almost without saluting the others.

"Mr. Loftus is very strange to-night," said Claudia to Sybilla, when the sisters were alone, "do you know I think I have found out a secret. He is in love with Miss Fane!"

Loftus returned the next day and proposed an excursion in the beautiful vallies which run off from the lake, losing themselves in the distant mountains. Whether it was a preconcerted arrangement or accident favoured his design, he contrived that Clara should fall to his share in their scrambling walk amongst the rugged though beautiful paths through the woods, which he had chosen for their morning's journey of discovery.

Clara could not avoid accepting his arm occasionally, for fear of exciting the observation of the rest, and when she did so she observed that it trembled. They had proceeded some distance when, by a sudden turn in the path, the party was separated, intentionally of course, by Loftus, and he stopped.

"Clara," said he, "my probation I feel has lasted as long as I can endure it. You have carried your severity to the utmost verge of my patience, and I must hear at once from your own lips whether there is the slightest chance of my ever

awakening in your heart a feeling which responds to mine.

"I loved you from the first moment we met, and my affection for you is stronger now than ever—I am ready to lay at your feet my fortune and my fate. I am ready to repair the wrong I have done you in idea, when I dared to imagine you less perfect than you are—when my folly and conceit made me fancy you easily won; but your extreme reserve, your imperturbable coldness—your vexatious self-command distracts me, and make me dread that in devoting myself to you I am adoring a mere idol, not a true divinity, who can hear my vows with tenderness and can not only pity, but love her votary."

"Mr. Loftus," replied Clara, "you mistake me, and have mistaken me from the beginning; but I have long forgiven and tried to forget the past—let it glide down the stream of time and be lost in oblivion. You are generous and just to me at last, but this is, like all you do, only an impulse; you mistrust me even now that you say all that can be said to assure me of your sincerity. Hear me and believe that I am also sincere. I have distrusted you too—I confess so much. I have not believed that your attachment was worthy of me. This may sound self-sufficient, but I know my own heart and I know what it deserves.

It merits, and it must have, perfect confidence before it dares to reply to your's. Consider our relative positions: I am dependant, without fortune, station, rank, consideration: the world would say I accepted your noble offer from worldly motives, how can I be certain, knowing the mistrust of your disposition, that you would not think so too if I did? You have all to offer me, I have only in return the power to expose you to the sneers of the class to which you belong. You have thought of this, you have struggled against this, and you have conquered the feeling for my sake. I thank you deeply—but I cannot agree to injure your prospects, to lower you in the estimation of the world to which you belong.

“I am an orphan, friendless, obscure—let me remain so. Your path is far from mine, leave me to the humble fortune circumstances have allotted me, and continue the exalted course your birth entitles you to pursue.”

“These are proud, cold words,” said Loftus; “they convince me of that which I more than feared: that you do not care enough for me to relinquish the wretched shadow of a duty you have created for yourself, and that you can at once abandon me to satisfy a miserable pride which I have offended.”

"No," said Clara, with emotion, "I will say more, I will conceal nothing from you. Be it pride, or fear, or doubt, I know not; but I dare not accept your offer lest you should repent hereafter, and reproach me for taking advantage of your generosity. I am not your equal and I am therefore unfitted to be yours."

"You despise, you dislike, it costs you nothing to reject me," cried Loftus, passionately, "were you born exactly in the same position as myself, had you fortune, rank, everything to give me besides yourself, which is all I ask—you would equally reject a man you cannot love. Say so, be candid, tell me so at once, and I swear to persecute you no more."

"I cannot," said Clara, hurriedly, and blushing deeply.

"Then your heart is mine in spite of all this hesitation!" exclaimed Edmond, seizing her hand.

"Stop," said Clara, almost breathless, "nothing can alter the resolution I have taken not to accept the hand, the fortune, the advantages you offer me—because the regard you imagine you feel for me would not, I am convinced, be proof against the censure such an union would create. I cannot submit to the blame I should

bring on you, I could not endure the change in your feelings towards me."

"It is your turn to mistrust me, Clara," said he, reproachfully; "but this revengeful opposition is unbecoming, is unfeminine—it would not exist if you loved me."

"It exists because I would not injure that which I love," said Clara.

"At least, then," persisted Mr. Loftus, "you leave me comfort, poor as it is ; this is wonderfully liberal. 'I will,' say you, 'deprive you of all hope for the present, and the future I mistrust ; I believe you capable of every weakness—of every unkindness ; I see no reason to regard you otherwise than as a miserable creature without dignity or character ; I abandon you—I reject you ; but you may console yourself with the perfectly useless assurance that I love the being I chastise.' Now, Clara, hear me. If it be true that I have any interest in your heart, and if it be true that your scruples arise from the paltry considerations which it is beneath you even to name, they can—they will be overcome in time, and I am content to wait till that time arrives. I will respect your pride, I will be indulgent to your mistaken notions ; but tell me that if at the end of a given period I prove myself deserving of you, by

showing that no change can alter the purity—the constancy of my attachment, tell me that you will let this subject be renewed. No knight-errant of old could agree to more, and, believe me, the *preux chevaliers* of the present time have infinitely less patience."

Clara was about to answer, although she trembled to do so, when her perturbation was put an end to by the return of some of the party.

"Have you fallen down a precipice?" cried Sybilla, "or slipped into a torrent, that you are so long coming on? We have been frightened to death—that is Clark and I, and Lord Clairmont sent us back, all through that long wood, to try and find you; Claudia, he said, and he, would sit under a tree till we came back, as they were tired; they are not half such good climbers as we are."

Sharp work for the boots!" exclaimed Clark; good for young legs—trying to the middle ages—pretty bit here—don't wonder you stopped—an eye to the sublime—Nature in all her graces—just take off that rock and tree for Lady Seymour—quite a picture ready made."

CHAPTER XIII.

Life with her is gone, and I
Learn but a new way to die!

Habington.

MRS. SPICER, in spite of the great change that had taken place in her family since the death of her only child, was still occupied in the usual mechanical round of her daily avocations: she still sat at her table, with her hand occasionally thrust into her drawer, and bringing forth from that repository the mystic papers which recorded the consumption of certain viands every week; but the Muse was no longer invoked, the odds and ends of poetry had disappeared, and the sharp look and sharp tone had vanished also.

Mr. Grimford still growled and snarled, and Mr. Frewen still scolded and tyrannised, but she, like Imogen,

—“was senseless of their wrath; a touch more rare
Subdued all pangs—all fears.”

In the place of the customary songs and son-

nets there was a little pencil drawing of Maria, which Clara Fane had once sketched, and this was looked at through tears that dimmed her spectacles and fell heavily on her black gown.

Her hope and animation, her ambition and anxiety were at an end ; her vanity and her pride were quenched ; only her inherent fondness for little gains remained ; and, but for that, she would have found no interest in life.

There is, in the midst of all afflictions, some trifling consolation, which lingers round the shade of former joys, and, in the paltry routine of a life left without enjoyment, fills part of the void which an unmitigable sorrow creates. This, in minds of a certain stamp, enables the sufferer to endure existence, and even to feel, at length, an interest in living on when all that pleased or excited to action is gone.

Poor Mrs. Spicer had developed no new or brighter qualities since her misfortune, but she had been the cause of their development in others, and much sympathy and kindness had been shown her by her neighbours, to all of whom the gentle virtues of Maria had endeared her, and who had never found anything to condemn in her mother beyond a certain inquisitiveness and littleness from which the poor girl so early removed was entirely free.

Dr. Cowley had not only attended his interesting patient with care, but assisted her mother both with his purse and his advice, as few but medical men do, in whom it rarely happens that benevolence and skill, generosity and disinterestedness do not unite. The marvel is, how doctors ever become men of wealth, so constant are the demands upon their liberality, and so seldom are they not responded to. No class of men are so frequently called upon to exercise their good feeling, and none are so ready to do so without grudging. He had called almost daily to see the bereaved mother, and had made his visits considerably longer than formerly, recounting all the news he thought could interest her, and relating his best anecdotes to rouse her from her mournful reveries.

On Mr. Grimford the event had made little change; he had, however, attended the funeral of Maria as chief mourner, a circumstance which in itself had weight with Mrs. Spicer; he had paid some of the expenses also, and had produced certain bottles of wine and spirits from his hoard to supply visitors and attendants with funeral refreshment. His tone was rather less harsh, or, rather, he was more silent than before, and though he uttered no expression of sympathy, yet

the widow did not doubt that he felt the loss of his goddaughter and pitied her misfortune.

Mr. Frewen had arrived in Poland Street only a few days after the conclusion of the sad event, and he showed no further commiseration than in remarking that he supposed now the kettle would never be brought up boiling and the door would never be opened. Mrs. Spicer fortunately did not hear his further observation that, at all events, he should not be deafened by the sound of squalling.

Mr. Frewen, in fact, seemed in a worse humour than usual this time, and his India complaints seemed to trouble him more; the attendance of Dr. Cowley was required, who communicated to Mrs. Spicer his opinion that his patient was in a bad way, and recommended her, as much for the sake of creating an interest in her mind as for anything else, to be attentive to him should he fall sick, as he anticipated.

This idea, and the possibility of some of his supposed wealth finding its way into her pocket, animated Mrs. Spicer to exertion, and when her lodger really fell sick, a fact which did happen soon after the doctor's prediction, she was almost as active as ever in providing for his wants.

As he grew daily worse, the doctor thought it necessary to ascertain from him if he had any

relations who could be written to, and he desired Mrs. Spicer to broach the subject. When she did so, however, the patient became very angry, weak as he was :—

“No,” he exclaimed, “I don’t want any horse-leeches about me; it’s bad enough as it is; you’re all in the same story, but I tell you I am not going to die this time, and if I am I wont be dictated to.”

But as his malady increased he became uneasy and made several efforts to speak which he was unable to do, nor could Mrs. Spicer, in spite of her quickness and penetration, discover the meaning of the few incoherent words he uttered.

She was in this uncomfortable state of uncertainty as to his wishes when she bethought herself of looking amongst his papers for some address which might assist her in discovering his friends or relatives, for his closeness and suspicious caution had always evaded even her curiosity, and she had never been able to find out more than she had gleaned by chance.

In a portfolio she at last found a letter which by the date must have been recently received: it was from a person named Macintosh, whose style and the matter of his epistle indicated that he was a lawyer, and whom Mrs. Spicer did not doubt was the same who occasionally had been in the habit of

visiting her lodger, when, engaged in the adjoining room, her quick ears had picked up the little information respecting him which she had gained. To this man Dr. Cowley wrote, and he was not long in obeying the summons.

When he arrived the Doctor questioned him respecting the connexions of Mr. Frewen, but his answers were very cautious.

"Mr. Frewen has made his will," said he, "to my certain knowledge; but I am not at liberty to say anything regarding his family, since he has not done so himself. In case of his demise I am ready to give whatever information I possess, but at present I must decline."

"But since I inform you that he is in imminent danger," said the Doctor, "I cannot see why you should withhold it at this moment, when some of his relatives might be sent to."

"That would be useless," answered the lawyer, "for he has none who are personally acquainted with him; his long absence in India has entirely alienated him from the few relations he has left."

"But his wife?" hazarded Mrs. Spicer.

The lawyer started.

"Has he named her, then?" asked he in a tone of surprise.

"Not exactly now," replied Mrs. Spicer pleased at her own sagacity; "but it seems so natural,

since he *is* married, that his wife should be sent for, you know."

"Not in this case," said the lawyer, smiling. "I fancy few people would be less welcome. I will, however, take care to let her know in case of his decease; but I do not think it my duty to disobey his commands at the present juncture of affairs."

As there was no persuading Mr. Mackintosh, he was allowed to retire, and the sick man was again left to the care of Mrs. Spicer. He lingered on, with only sufficient consciousness of his position to be extremely irritable; at length one morning as she was moving about in his room, Mrs. Spicer observed that he suddenly made an effort to raise himself in bed, and seemed searching for some object which he could not reach.

"Where have they hid it!" exclaimed he; it is properly attested, and I have taken care of him—at last he will be a rich man—why should he reproach me then?—and as for her she shall get only what the law gives her; not a penny more.—Do you hear?—Mackintosh, what are you about?—Give me the pen, I'll—"

But the sentence begun was never destined to be finished. Mr. Frewen before it was concluded had sunk back upon his pillow and expired.

Mrs. Spicer instantly summoned Dr. Cowley, and the lawyer was sent for in all haste.

"Well," said he, "there is nothing now to be done but to send immediately to Mrs. Wybrow, whose present address I have only ascertained lately, and we must communicate to her accordingly."

"Wybrow!" exclaimed Mrs. Spicer; "what relation then is she to Mr. Frewen?"

"Oh, ma'am," replied Mr. Mackintosh, "the secret must come out, for there's no reason it should not now. The name of Frewen was only assumed by your late lodger for his own reasons—he was, in fact, Mr. Matthew Wybrow, and the lady to whom I alluded is his widow; a person much younger than himself, who, for her own reasons, has been also going by another name, and calls herself Mrs. Frillet."

"What!" exclaimed Mrs. Spicer; "then she must be the very lady that came to this house in a brougham, and took away Miss Fane and her aunt into the country. Was there ever anything so odd!—that the husband and wife should be in the same house together and not know it!"

"That is indeed a curious fact," said Mr. Mackintosh, "and if I had known it would have

saved me some trouble in tracing her. I did so at the desire of her husband, from whom she was separated; not because he wanted to see her, but in order that he might avoid her. He has been at hide and seek for several years since his return from India, and assumed another name that she should not discover him, and force him to make her an allowance. I have long tried to persuade him to do so, and give up the miserable life he was leading, but his obstinacy was unbounded, and his dislike of her so remarkable, that he vowed he would rather live in a garret all his days than be made to give her a penny of his money."

"Can young Wybrow, who should have married my poor Maria," faltered Mrs. Spicer, wiping her eyes, "be any relation of his, do you think? —in that case he may come in for something, poor fellow."

"I do not think it unlikely," said the lawyer, "though he only spoke of a brother, whom he had not seen for thirty years."

"Wybrow's father, perhaps," cried she, "my dear child used to tell me he had an uncle who had gone to India, and never been since heard of. Was the old gentleman rich?"

"He had a very large property," replied Mr. Mackintosh, "a very large one—we must ascertain

who these Wybrows are you speak of. Do you know where they are to be found?"

"I know where the mother is," said Mrs. Spicer; "she can be written to at Loftus Hall, Derbyshire."

"I will undertake to apprise her," said Dr. Cowley; "if Mr. Loftus's protégé should turn out to be the heir, the money of this strange man will not be ill bestowed."

"Poor Maria!" sobbed Mrs. Spicer; "its all of no use to me now!—and he, poor thing, I daresay he will only regret that she can never share it with him."

This reflection overwhelmed poor Mrs. Spicer with sorrow, and she was in the midst of a passion of tears when a knock at the street door startled her.

"Lord bless me!" exclaimed she, "if I wasn't certain that William Wybrow was at this identical moment in Egypt, I could swear to his knock—how foolish!—as if it could be him."

But her amazement was extreme when on descending to the passage and having opened the door she beheld no other than William Wybrow himself—his face radiant with pleasure, his eyes bright with expectation, and his whole appearance expressive of cheerfulness and joy.

Mrs. Spicer, with a loud scream, rushed into the little parlour, where she threw herself on a chair and covered her face with her hands. Wybrow followed in astonishment at this reception.

"What is the matter, dear Mrs. Spicer?" cried he; "I wrote to tell Maria of my arrival, but I fancy my impatience has outstripped the post. I am afraid I have alarmed you by this sudden apparition—where is the dear girl?—I hope she is well,—"

Mrs. Spicer answered not, but continued to sob and to rock herself backwards and forwards on her chair. Wybrow surveyed her in a state of trepidation—he glanced at her black dress—he looked round the room—he saw that the piano-forte was removed, that there was no music book on the accustomed stand—he rushed towards the door of Mr. Grimford's room, and opened it suddenly. Mr. Grimford looked up from his drawing-table, and with an exclamation jumped up, over-setting his portfolio.

"Good God!" cried Wybrow, "some dreadful calamity has happened—where is Maria!"

Mr. Grimford stood staring at him with a face of wonder.

"Don't you know then," he exclaimed, "that she died more than two months ago?"

Wybrow started back, uttered a cry and fell senseless on the ground.

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A heart-breaking explanation followed this scene. It appeared that circumstances connected with the death of the chief officer of the Nile expedition had occasioned the discoverers to give up further researches for a time, and their return to Europe, with the treasures of knowledge which they had acquired, was hastened accordingly.

The loss of a mail-packet had deprived Wybrow of all the letters he should have received, and when he reached Southampton he had posted one to Maria, full of joyous expectation, exulting hope and delight at the prospect of seeing her soon.

That letter arrived a few hours after he did, in Poland Street, and found him prostrated by a high fever, which he had escaped throughout his journey across the heated deserts he had explored, and which awaited him, together with the announcement of his unmitigable misfortune.

For several weeks Mrs. Spicer and his mother who had been summoned from Derbyshire, and had arrived to find the desolation of heart and dangerous sickness of the son she adored, sat by his bed-side—the same bed in which his Maria

breathed her last—and expected every hour that he would follow her, for whom they mutually grieved; but nature was stronger than his sorrow, and he was slowly recovering from the worst part of the attack when Mr. Loftus arrived in London.

A letter from Mrs. Wybrow telling the sad story of her son's return and the danger he was in, and entreating him if possible to come to relieve the anxious inquiries which Wybrow ceased not to make after his friend, had been attended to with a promptitude which caused Loftus to suffer in the estimation of Clara, whom he abruptly quitted at Como.

His business now was to remove his friend to a more suitable dwelling, and a small house was soon taken for Mrs. Wybrow in the outskirts of the town, where the air was purer, and where his mother was able to surround him with more conveniences than in Mrs. Spicer's confined lodgings.

Here Loftus devoted himself to the unfortunate young man with all the tenderness of an attached brother, and it was then that he saw lawyers and arranged all the necessary business consequent on William Wybrow's succession to twenty thousand pounds, left him by his uncle as his brother's heir.

Alas! when Wybrow recovered, after several

months, from his severe illness and found himself an independant man, sad were his reflections on the insufficiency of wealth to restore happiness. That his mother was placed far beyond the reach of want for the future was a balm to his mind which assisted in consoling him for the terrible disappointment of all his hopes and wishes ; and he indulged also in the satisfaction of providing for the declining years of Mrs. Spicer, whom he induced to give up her lodging-house and retire to a small, pretty cottage in one of the villages near London, where she had a few acquaintances, and would find some society.

Here she was sometimes visited by Mr. Grimford who, though he condescended to accept her hospitality never came any nearer the proposal which, in former day, she had waited so anxiously for, and which it had become second-nature to her to expect. He was a trifle less gruff than before, and, on the whole, appeared on his visiting days a more humanised being, and, as the country air freshened his spirits and improved his appetite, he rarely exhibited himself in a disagreeable point of view. It was both a relief to his ill-temper and a triumph to Mrs. Spicer to hear that the person who had succeeded her, giving a small sum of money for the goodwill

of her establishment, was far from giving satisfaction, and consequently Mr. Grimford had an opportunity of constantly threatening to leave his lodgings at an early period, which threat was, however, not put into execution.

CHAPTER XIV.

That light we thought would last,
Behold even now 'tis past—
And all our morning dreams,
Have vanished with its beams.

Moore.

MEANTIME, day after day glided on, and still Sir Anselm was delayed at Milan in consequence of the continued indisposition of the Countess Altheim. They had a flying visit from her son, who was on his way back to Vienna to join his regiment, and had left her in charge of her attentive brother-in-law who sent greetings to each and all of his friends at Como, but begged them to be patient with him a little longer.

The sisters and Clara continued, therefore, to regret his absence instead of welcoming his arrival, and amused themselves occasionally in visiting his villa on the other side of the lake, which was only inhabited at present by Italian servants hired for the occasion at Como. The different

chambers were arranged by their care, and various elegant trifles were carried there in order to surprise him and to please the new acquaintance to whose arrival they all looked forward with much delight.

Another of their occupations was rowing to Como, where Mr. Loftus was, for the present established, in order to watch the boat-building of Cristofero, who was so much engaged in it that he could scarcely allow himself to quit this favourite employ for an hour, and he even tore himself away from it with difficulty when his services were required by his master, being convinced that when he had once succeeded in building a boat accordingly to his own plan no one acquainted with his master, who had an opportunity of witnessing its superiority, would think of entering the unwieldy tubs that, according to his notion, disfigured the lake of Como.

The sisters were fond of opposing his opinion in jest, in order to bring forth the entertaining energy of his asseverations.

"I am sure," said Claudia, "your boat will not be half so good as those nice broad ones with room for a table inside, so convenient and with such pretty striped awnings over the great hoops. I am quite satisfied, and will never get into your new one which will upset and drown us all."

"You shall see," replied Cristofero, speaking, as he was wont to do when excited on certain subjects, in the dialect common to his class—a mode of speech which he knew amused the young ladies: "I build a 'Mudian boat, reg'lar clipper; very long over all, flush deck, no gunwales, plenty of beam, good hold of the water, nothing upset her; mast stepped close to the bows, five and forty feet high without the gaff, rake very much, go close to the wind, three p'ints and a half either way, blow as hard as you like, sea mountains high, nothing to the 'Mudian, she go right through all—only get wet jacket p'raps, long as you keep her off the rocks she nebber go down—ha, ha, ha," and he showed his white teeth and laughed till the tears ran from his eyes.

"What does he mean by a Mudian?" asked Claudia of Mr. Loftus, as they rowed home.

"He is a native of the Island of Bermuda, as you have heard him say," said Edmond, "where the boats are of a particular build and are able to live in the wild seas that surround that coral coast, originally discovered by means of shipwreck and too often visited in the same manner. Both the boats and the pilots are famous; the latter steer by looking into the water, for their sight is so piercing that they can avoid every rock and reef against which their vessel might strike: they are

excellent sailors, so I have no doubt Cristofero will make something good of his hobby—though it will not be much required on this lake probably, where the large cumbrous craft we generally use answers very well, and where the steamer suits all the purposes of celerity. But I do not oppose the good creature whose vanity is pleased by being thus employed."

From the time that Clara had received from Edmond Loftus the unequivocal declaration of his attachment, she had avoided being alone with him, desirous that the subject should not be renewed. Very far was she from being satisfied with the turn things had taken, yet she felt that she acted according to the dictates of duty and honour.

"If I am really so dear to him," she thought, "he will be content to await some change in my present resolution, and I should thus have confidence in his sincerity. I fear he is guided merely by the caprice of the moment, and, in that case, I should injure both him and myself by consenting to be his wife. If, hereafter, he still feels the same I shall be happier in agreeing to his wish, being certain that he really loves me, and my scruples will then be at an end."

With regard to Loftus himself he had re-

solved to act in so patient and prudent a manner that Clara should have no excuse for persisting in her refusal. He respected her delicacy and approved her feeling, although he had no intention whatever of submiting to the tyranny of her decision.

"She is very young," said he, "and unprotected as she is has reason for her caution, particularly as it must be confessed that I have not altogether acted in a manner to inspire her with confidence. I will console myself with the hope that '*Le temps viendra*,' and meantime be as content as circumstances and woman's caprice will allow."

It was in the midst of these good resolutions that, to the infinite amazement of the whole party, and to the vexation of Cristofero, whose vessel was now nearly completed and when he hoped soon to exhibit its manœuvres on the lake, Mr. Loftus suddenly disappeared from Como, without a word of explanation, and left his friends in a state of disappointment and uncertainty.

Clara could not regard his absence in a favourable point of view; she imagined that, weary of the restraint she had imposed on him, he had resolved to put an end to it at once, to break off all further connexion, and to seek elsewhere for the excitement he loved. It was not without

tears that she arrived at this conviction, and although she endeavoured to applaud her own heart for its courage in rejecting that which she desired, a certain regret would, nevertheless, intrude which she could not altogether subdue. She felt too much inclined to say with the poet—

“Celui qui, pour me fuir, a quitté ces beaux lieux
Ne m’aura pas quitté—si’l m’avez dit adieu !”

“I have been,” she thought, “too severe, and he consequently thinks me indifferent. He is, therefore, perhaps less to blame than myself, but it is clear that his is an unreasonable character on which I must not rely. My heart is but too much inclined to be indulgent and I must keep guard upon it: there is but one thing sure in this life, and that is that our existence is all struggle, either a bodily or a mental one, and rest is what we may vainly seek. It arrives only at the last. Poor Maria! I have wept her fate instead of rejoicing in it. She knew only happiness during the brief space of her innocent career: all who surrounded loved her and she was never deceived. She died with a mother’s devotion and care still hovering round and cherishing her, and with the certainty that he she had chosen was true to her. No caprice, no uncertainty came between their affection, and though her lot was humble she had

never known reverses, had never been obliged to strive for the means of living. Alas ! for my part,

‘I ’gin to be aweary of the sun.’

Yet, this is ungrateful to the Providence that has so much protected me ; I, a foundling, an unhappy outcast, depending on chance bounty and benevolence in the helpless years of infancy, and since then received and kindly treated by strangers—till they have become to me more than many relations are ! What must be the ties of blood when affections independent of them are of such quick growth !—would that Edmond Loftus were really what I ought to love !’

Like all her reveries these reflections ended with his name, and after a great deal of reasoning she returned to her first thought and set herself

“To weave the web again.”

But while she thus dreamt on, a new source of disquietude was preparing for Clara, originating in a quarter which she could not have anticipated. She had observed that ever since the arrival of Lady Seymour the manner of that lady towards her was otherwise than cordial, and of late it had become extremely cold. There was a haughtiness and distance which she had endeavoured not to see as long as possible, but, more particularly since the

absence of Mr. Loftus it had increased, and she could no longer doubt that she had fallen under the displeasure of the aunt of her pupils, she could not understand why.

But though this was sufficiently annoying it was almost forgotten in the greater vexation of observing, that within a short time Claudia had avoided her, had looked upon her with an expression she had never before known, and that a chill had come over her affection quite unaccounted for. At first, seeing the progress of her intimacy with the Marquis, she had looked upon the circumstance as merely owing to the pre-occupation of her mind, and had not noticed it; but it was now become too evident, and she felt that some extraordinary revulsion of feeling had taken place.

The Marquis had left the lake to meet some near relations, who had summoned him to Genoa, and they were now alone together: Claudia might naturally be expected to be pensive on this first parting from one who was her acknowledged lover, but her manner was not that of melancholy, it was cold and serious, and she sought the society of Lady Seymour in preference to her own or her sister's. As Clara had never been able to control either of these young ladies beyond what their own inclinations permitted, she did not enforce

on Claudia, who was more than ever averse to learn, the necessity of attending to study : she therefore gave herself up to Sybilla, who had taken a violent passion for perfecting herself in German, and they passed most of their time now together, leaving Claudia and her aunt to themselves.

From being looked up to and consulted, cared for and affectionately attended to, as if to please her was the first wish of the whole family, she now found herself almost neglected, her conversation scarcely listened to, her desires unfulfilled, and her presence unwelcomed.

"This then," she reflected, "is the fate of dependence. Novelty and caprice govern all. Where there are no ties of relationship the slightest accident will alter every feeling which appeared to exist, and the favourite of a day will be thrown aside as carelessly as an old garment. Claudia is but a child still, and has been worked upon by some one, or has taken some false views of her own dignity as an heiress and one about to become a married woman ; this may be natural, perhaps, and I must take opportunities of correcting the error, but Lady Seymour's conduct is more inexplicable still and fills me with surprise. She assumes, altogether, an air of command, and treats me without consideration. As

I have really no position but what was granted me, I have no appeal and must submit, hard as it is to be nothing where one has once enjoyed all."

The servants of the family had hitherto obeyed her as the mistress of the establishment, referred, as they always had been, to her by Claudia ; but now her commands were scarcely noticed, and there was a carelessness about them all which showed plainly that they were influenced by some inimical feeling.

In particular she was struck by the flippant rudeness of Giulia, the confidential maid of her pupils, who had, till now, been extremely subservient and civil. On one occasion she appeared inclined to throw the veil entirely aside, for in the presence of Lady Seymour and Claudia, when Clara desired her to perform some trifling office for herself, Giulia turned her back on her suddenly and, without a reply, quitted the room. As Claudia took no notice of this impertinence, and Lady Seymour gave an approving glance, Clara saw, with extreme distress, that the slight was intended.

" Claudia," said she, gently, " did you observe that your maid is not respectful to me ? I imagine not, as you took no notice. Remember, my dear pupil, that, as your governess, I am, at least, so near to you that any rudeness to me is disrespect to yourself."

Claudia blushed, looked down, but did not reply ; and Lady Seymour answered—

“ I am sorry, Miss Fane, that the manners of my nieces’ people are not refined enough for you ; I really did not see that poor Giulia was rude ; she is accustomed to attend to her young mistresses only, and, probably, did not think her duty required a further extension of her services. There are bounds to all pretensions, you know, which must be marked.”

Clara thought it better not to make any rejoinder to this observation, and retired to her room, out of spirits and distressed. There she could not restrain her tears, when a soft tap at her room door obliged her to rouse herself, and Sybilla entered. She looked at her fixedly and then sat down.

“ My dear governess,” said she, “ you have been crying, and so has Claudia, too. What is the matter with the whole family ? I think we have taken leave of our senses ; nobody is a bit like what they were a little while ago, and yet I can’t see that anything has happened. Mr. Clark says it is the east wind makes all the world cross, for even Cristofero is sulky because Mr. Loftus is gone off in such a hurry. Now, I am determined to understand it and put people to rights. I asked Claudia what made her cry, and

she says its you ; if I ask you, you will say it is she. Auntie Seymour looks mysterious, and says I am to young too understand it ; now, I'm sure I'm as wise as she is, at any rate. Giulia, when I scolded her just now for not doing as you told her, was saucy ; altogether I am quite amazed, so pray try and explain."

Clara tried to laugh and persuade her that there was nothing in the affair, but Sybilla was too shrewd not to be convinced that something had gone wrong.

"Now," said she "I will tell you what has come into my head : Giulia has had a letter from Paris, from some friend of hers, and she has shown it to Auntie Seymour. I heard her say, when she thought I was out of hearing—' Who could have thought she was a friend of that girl?' to which Giulia replied—' Oh yes, milady, and master knew her before he took her to be the governess of the young ladies, and only did it for a blind.' They must have meant you, I think, and what they meant I can't think, but auntie said—' I must get rid of her quietly.' Now, if they are plotting against you I am determined to oppose them ; it is done out of jealousy, I know, because auntie Seymour wants to marry Sir Ansclm and be rich, and she thinks he likes you best—Giulia has said so a hundred times."

Clara listened to all this in breathless surprise, and, bewildered with the suddenness of the charge against her, she found difficulty in collecting her thoughts to answer—

“ My darling Sybilla, thanks for your good intentions, but do not, I entreat, say a word, or act unadvisedly ; almost all differences can be adjusted if a proper explanation is made at a right time, and there can be nothing of what I am accused which a few words will not at once set to rights. I will speak first to Lady Seymour and afterwards to Claudia, whose coldness has, I confess, been the only thing that has wounded me.”

“ She is a foolish thing,” said Sybilla, “ and I will go and tell her to come and beg your pardon directly, and let us all be as happy as before. I will write and make dear Sir Anselm return ; auntie Seymour was always famous for squabbles, and I’m sure she will only make everything worse.”

Clara lost no time in sending a message to Lady Seymour requesting to speak to her, and she received an answer, brought by Giulia, that she might go to her room whenever she pleased.

She accordingly went, and found her ladyship seated, as usual, before her easel, *making as if* she were executing a large landscape in oils.

"Oh, Miss Fane," she said, in a condescending tone, "you are right to ask this interview. I dare say you see yourself the necessity of matters coming to a conclusion; these sort of deceits must end sooner or later. I am ready to hear your own explanation of your conduct."

"Madam," said Clara, "I am come to entreat an explanation of yours; a few moments ago I should not have thought of doing so, but a word overhead by Sybilla and communicated to me has so much surprised and distressed me that I cannot delay begging to know what I am supposed to have done which has caused my position in this family to be so suddenly changed."

"Read this letter, Miss Fane," replied Lady Seymour, majestically; "let me entreat you not to make a scene—I do not wish you to confess on your knees; but I have duties to perform to the children of my dear, departed, lamented, excellent, nephew, which oblige me to commit the indelicacy of entering into particulars quite contrary to my habits."

Clara took the letter offered her, and turned it over without recognising the hand. It was written in bad English, and was addressed to Mdle. Guilia from a friend in Paris: it was thus conceived.

"When we parted in London I told you of

the new place I had got with Mrs. Montague, who lived like a princess, and I thought was quite a lady, but she turned out to be the *chère amie* of Mr. Luttrel—only think how odd! I went with them to Paris, and there I had a fine life of it, for mistress was for ever quarrelling with him because she expected he would have married her. I used to listen and heard her abuse him, and he was always taunting her about that Miss Fane, who is governess to his daughters, and used to be a friend of Mrs. Montague's, and saying she was ten times handsomer than she was, and that she had promised to run off with him whenever he liked. He was very aggravating, and would laugh ready to kill himself to see her in such a passion. He was a very vain man, and believed all the world was in love with him, though I'm sure I gave him no encouragement. Well, you know how he got killed in a duel with that French Count that Mrs. Montague ran to when they had their last quarrel—and serve him right too—I've no patience with such men. I wonder if your governess has been found out yet?—misses *does* hate her so."

There was more to the same purpose, which Clara did not think proper to read; she had seen enough to prove to her that her situation was a

very painful and awkward one, and she felt that she had a difficult task before her.

"Lady Seymour," said she, laying the letter on the table near her, "I presume you do not intend to be advised by such persons as the writer of this letter or the receiver. I have nothing to say to the communication it contains, since I could have no possible control over the assertions of Mr. Luttrel, uttered to a woman in the position of this Mrs. Montague, of whom I have no knowledge whatever."

"You assert then," said Lady Seymour, "that you are not a friend of this Mrs. Montague or Celia Sawyer, or whatever her name may be?"

Clara started, and the movement was not unobserved by Lady Seymour.

"Oh, you begin to recollect, I see," she observed.

"I recognise," said Clara, "in the name you have last mentioned, a young woman who was known to a respectable family of my acquaintance who informed me of her breach of propriety, but neither they nor I ever were aware that it was with Mr. Luttrel she left her home. I never knew Mr. Luttrel till I entered his family, although I had seen him once in the street, and been distressed by ungentleman-like conduct, which was, I am sorry to think, probably habitual

to him. Thus far I of course can explain the fact of my name being mentioned in the society where it seems to have been a theme—beyond this I am quite ignorant, and I do not consider it suitable to my dignity nor that of yourself or my pupils that I should further notice it. The character of the unfortunate Mr. Luttrel was better known to your ladyship than to me, and you cannot be, therefore, so much surprised as I am at the lightness with which he made free with the reputation of others. I ought to have been told of this before, but I thank you for acquainting me with it even now. I hope Miss Luttrel has not read the letter I have seen—the allusion to her father's death I trust has prevented that."

Lady Seymour looked confused and annoyed at the calmness of Clara, and replied—

"Of course not; such subjects are unfit for her age. I was prepared for your denying all this, but you must see that I have duties which prevent my agreeing to your remaining longer with my nieces under the present cloud which obscures you. My nerves will not permit of scenes, therefore pray spare me any, and let me beg of you to accept the notice I now give you, that your services may cease from this time. You will observe that it will be better that all should

be settled before the return of Sir Anselm Fairfax, as I really cannot have explanations on so indelicate a subject made to him, and if you do not go, you know, the poor girls will be brought in and obliged to know all about it."

"Do you suppose, madam," said Clara, "that I shall allow such charges as these to influence my destiny and take no steps to have them falsified? I am convinced that Sir Anselm will treat all this absurd scandal as it deserves, and, as guardian of my pupils, it is to him that I shall appeal."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Lady Seymour, redening; "you seem to know your power, madam; but I am guardian also, and as a female relative have a right to dictate in such a point, and I think having been always a mother to those dear children, my right will be acknowledged—even before that of your protector."

"I cannot conceive that you will be so unjust towards me," said Clara, mildly, "as to prevent my asking Sir Anselm's advice."

"It will not alter my intentions I assure you," replied Lady Seymour; "but I will not detain you longer, Miss Fane: I have done my duty in explaining matters, and wish you had been able to make me see your conduct in a clearer light. Whenever you think proper to leave this place your convenience shall be attended to. I will

send some one with you as far as you like on your way back to your friends—all I beg is that you will not linger in the neighbourhood, as it might unsettle the minds of the poor children."

CHAPTER XV.

Oh ! if it prove,
Tempests are kind and salt waves fresh in love !

Twelfth Night.

AFTER such an interview as that which had taken place, Clara saw that the determination of Lady Seymour was that she should leave her situation. When she returned to her chamber she sat for some time motionless and cold, overcome with the mortifying conviction of her fortunes depending on circumstances and persons so mean and so false as those whose influence she felt.

To appeal to the affections of her pupils she felt was wrong, as, either Claudia had already given her up in consequence of false representations made to induce her to do so, or in case of explanations being called forth, the sad secret of the mode of her father's death might be revealed too suddenly, and occasion the sorrow of her future life.

After reflecting for awhile she came to the resolution of leaving the villa, and repairing to Como, from whence she proposed to herself to write to Sir Anselm and state to him her circumstances, entreating his protection and advice.

A note from Lady Seymour put an end to her dilemma ; for she informed Clara that she had considered it so much better to avoid "a scene" that she had induced the young ladies to go out with her to the villa at Varennna the following day, and she had ordered a boat to be ready at her service, during their absence, which would take her to the inn at Como, from whence her homeward journey would begin.

Enclosed was a sum of money more liberal than would have been offered her if the funds, from which it was derived, had been drawn from her own resources ; but Lady Seymour was very generous and just in her payments for the orphans, whose ample fortunes made economy unnecessary.

With a sinking heart Clara was obliged to accept this sum, as she knew that for some time she should be obliged to meet expences to which she had hitherto been quite a stranger, and as it was merely her due and the payment of her services, she endeavoured to repress the tears of pride, which would flow in spite of herself.

"For the first time then," said she, "I know what is the value of this

'Yellow, glittering, precious gold,'

which enables the rich to insult and oppress the poor; perhaps, in future, my experience will become more extensive in this as in other mortifications, as the changes in the atmosphere of my life exhibit clouds of various forms and hues. I must leave then these beloved beings, whom I considered bound to me by ties which could not be lightly broken—it will, however, be, I am convinced, only for a time. Sir Anselm will not abandon me. Claudia will soon be convinced by him, and, if I am not deceived in his friendship also, he will take such steps as shall restore me to them once more."

Reassured by this reflection she passed a tolerably quiet day, and got through their evening row on the lake better than she expected, with Lady Seymour, Sybilla, and Clark. Claudia having excused herself from being of the party.

Lady Seymour talked of their intended excursion on the following day, and remarked that as Miss Fane had been before and she knew she was occupied, they would not tax her politeness to accompany them.

The way thus paved, Clara saw them the next

morning leave the villa at an earlier hour than Lady Seymour generally quitted her room, and, about an hour afterwards, another boat appeared at the foot of the marble steps, into which she saw her own baggage put, and was then informed by a servant that all was prepared for her departure, and that he had been desired, if she wished it, to accompany her to Como, where her apartments had been ordered at the hotel.

The morning had been extremely brilliant : not a single cloud obscured the blue sky, and the snowy summits of the highest mountains appeared clear and sharp against the fine background it presented. Clara had hurried into the gardens and visited every familiar terrace, pausing at each accustomed spot and lingering in every bower she had loved so well. As she leant over the balustrades of a platform, where a fountain threw up a silver jet to dash it back again upon a luxuriant mass of odoriferous shrubs, a few large drops of rain fell and, across the lake, a low moan of the rising wind told that a change of weather was at hand.

Fearing that her voyage might be arrested if she delayed, she hastily descended the steps and entered the boat : declining, however, the services of the man who had offered to accompany her, as she was well enough acquainted with her destina-

tion not to require them. He did not seem sorry to be spared the duty, and she accordingly was pushed off by the hired boatman into the middle of the lake. Scarcely had they rowed a few yards when again the low moan of the wind was heard, and a black cloud spread itself across the sky, while a vivid flash darting from it was welcomed by a roar of thunder so loud and sudden that every hill seemed to shake and tremble with its voice. Without a moment's warning more a deluge of rain descended, the wind rose in a hurricane and the waters, leaping up round them, as if terrified by this sudden burst of fury, dashed over the boat from whence the boatman was endeavouring as quickly as possible to drag off the awning, the curtains of which gathered the wind. In such an instant had the blast taken them that the unwieldy craft was nearly overset and one of the oars was washed into the waters—the boatman made a sudden snatch to recover it, but while he did so another cracking burst of thunder and lightning opened all the sky, and a terrific wind came rushing down the lake, whirling the boat round and round like a child's toy. Clara was thrown by a wave prostrate at the bottom, and when she looked up she was alone at the mercy of one of those terrific storms which defy all calcu-

lation, and which can transform the calm paradise of those lovely lakes into a boiling ocean of tumultuous danger—in an instant.

She lay in an agony of terror, grasping the timbers nearest her and creeping under the seat, while the boat went on hither and thither, now nearly filled with water, now turned almost over on its side, now striking against rocks near the shore, now dashed against floating bulks of trees, which the violence of the storm had twisted from the earth and hurled into the lake. Every echo resounding with the voice of the thunder, every peak alight with the dancing lightning, and the raging hurricane careering over the waters.

Far away drifted the battered vessel in which Clara lay, scarcely conscious of the terrible danger which threatened her, and chilled and stunned by the beating waves and the resounding thunder. A dark mist had now shrouded everything, the shores were invisible, and not a mountain showed its head.

At length she felt that the motion was rather less violent, and though she was still tossed hither and thither, it was with some abatement of the fury of the storm, she raised herself a little, and ventured to look over the side; but, at that moment, a deeper swell, a louder growl was heard, and she was dashed back again. She had time

alone to perceive that another danger had overtaken her; for, advancing with more than usual celerity, she perceived the steam packet, which was hastening toward its daily destination with passengers from Como to the other extremity of the lake. Rapid as was the glance she was enabled to give, she saw also that a very short distance behind another vessel was coming at a speed scarcely short of it, and, by the immense length of the white sail, which now lay almost flat upon the surface of the water, she recognised the Bermudian boat of Cristofero.

In another instant she felt that her wretched little bark was being impelled towards the steamer, she uttered a loud shriek and waved a handkerchief she held, in the faint hope of attracting attention, but no time was left for a pause—the steamer swept on, her boat was thrown exactly in its way, and a whelming rush of waters burst and closed above her head.

* * * *

The excursion of the sisters and Lady Seymour had been from Menaggio, in a small carriage across to Porlezza by a charming valley, where two beautiful little lakes offer a miniature resemblance to that of Como. The storm had overtaken them in the valley and entirely spoilt the enjoy-

ment of the day, so that they were fain to return as quickly as they could, but not before they had passed some hours in a wretched hovel, glad to take shelter wherever it could be found. They were wet, wearied out and dispirited, when they returned, and the first movement of Sybilla on entering the villa was to run to Clara's room, the door of which she threw open, and began to exclaim about their disasters as she did so—when perceiving it empty and the air of gloom and vacancy which always pervades a place no longer tenanted striking upon her with a chill, she darted back again to her sister, calling for Clara and begging to know where she was.

There was great confusion below—the servants all surrounding Lady Seymour, who was in hysterics, screaming violently, while Giulia stood by wringing her hands, listening to the story of a man who was relating with all the exaggerations of fear, the accident of the morning.

He affirmed that the young lady was cut to pieces by the steamer, the boatman swallowed up, the steamer gone down, and the Porgy swamped.

All this was told and repeated over and over again, while the standers by heard it, passing through various stages of horror.

“Poor Miss Fane, such a nice young lady! I'm sure we all liked her so much!” expressed the

feelings of all those servants, who had seen her leave the villa in the morning without the slightest concern.

Lady Seymour was taken to her room, and Giulia busied herself about her young mistresses.

"Good gracious," said she, in half English, "if I'd have known it would have been her death I would never have show'd that letter—only milady wanted so to have something against her."

"What letter, Giulia?" exclaimed Claudia, with emphasis, "something wrong has been going on, and you have all combined to deceive me, and injure my dear governess. I shall never be happy again for having been unkind to her."

"Oh," sobbed Giulia, "I didn't invent it, only milady didn't want you to see the letter about her—I wish I had burnt it!—so she told me to say my Lord Clairmont was in love with *her* instead of you; but he isn't no more than he is with me—it did just as well to set you against her, and then you needn't know anything about your papa's goings on, I have the letter here at this moment."

Claudia looked at her with flashing eyes.

"I would give the world," she said, "to see that letter—give it me. Sybilla," she added, speaking to her sister and stamping on the ground

in an agony of impatience, “*make her show it me.*”

And both sisters seizing upon their maid, as they had often done in play, but now in earnest, forced from her the letter which she had in her bosom and which she gave up not unwillingly, impelled by a certain feeling common to vulgar minds of liking to cause pain by unpleasant disclosures.

“Now,” said Claudia, “I have it—now hear me, Giulia, and remember it is I who am your *real* mistress—if ever you dare to repeat a word that is in this wicked letter, in which my papa’s name is mentioned, if ever you dare to abuse Miss Fane or side with my aunt against me, I will order you out of the house that instant—without a pension, and never see you again. There is an end of it at once!” and without looking at it, she tore the letter to pieces and threw the fragments from the window into the lake.

“Now go away,” she said, “and repeat to my aunt what I have said and done, and nurse her, but do not come near me again, send Ellen.”

Giulia slunk away quite abashed, and repaired to the servants’ hall, having no mind to encounter the remorse of Lady Seymour, who continued to persist in fainting fits, as she was there informed.

The two sisters sat clasped in each other’s

arms, silent and solemn, without tears or words, so appalled were they at the suddenness of the supposed fate of Clara: their eyes were fixed on the still perturbed lake, and they watched the rapid, restless clouds coursing each other over the sky, when suddenly a bright gleam of sunshine broke forth, and the whole expanse shone one mass of deep red gold, sky, lake and mountains.

At that instant they discerned at a distance, advancing very swiftly, the Bermudian boat, with its high white sail cutting against the sky.

"Look Claudia," said Sybilla, "it is Cristofero's boat, which we were so anxious to see finished—which *she* would have been so glad to see!"

And they both burst into a passion of tears.

* * * *

William Wybrow was slowly recovering his health, and his friend Loftus had now left him to the care of his mother and was on his return to Italy. He hesitated, at first, whether he would not go into Derbyshire and there remain; but as it was scarcely advisable that the invalid should venture on so cold a climate now that the autumn was advanced, he felt little inducement to go there alone.

"What have I," he said, "to entice me there?

no familiar friends and faces, no dear anxious being watching my return. I may come and go, may travel or remain, no heart is either warmed or chilled by anything I can do. In such circumstances as mine, travel is the only resource; as it, at least, affords variety and shows human nature in its most entertaining form. To those who have no tie to attach them, England is a melancholy spot—I could easily feel it otherwise, if my vain longing for that which is never to be mine, were accomplished.

“‘There to return and die at home at last’ would be happiness after all: but not alone! Alone! the saddest, the most despairing of words! I have, I fear, played too long with my own happiness, and now I cannot restore the hope I have thrown away. Yet, I cannot abandon the impression that Clara loves me, not, Heaven knows, for my merits—but for a woman’s reason only, it may be. She is very resolute in a wrong cause—if she fears my constancy as regards her, that has not been my failing, and she has cured me, at last, of mistrust. She is right, however, in what she said, it is a folly to brave the world and create scandals—if one can help it. I would willingly not have loved her, but

‘My stars are more in fault than I,’
and there is no resisting them.”

While he was thus musing, his preparations were, nevertheless, making to take the path that led to where she was, and he allowed himself to indulge in a variety of plans to soften Clara's obduracy and induce her to shorten the time of his probation. In this mood he arrived at Geneva, where he found letters from Sir Anselm and Lord Clairmont, one from Milan, the other from Veniee ; but in neither had he any news of the dwellers on the Lake, and he felt disappointed and unhappy as he turned them over in vain, as a lover

“ Looks what the corners, what the crossings tell,
And lifts each folding for a fond farewell.”

He threw himself back in his chair and gave himself up to uneasy thoughts, when his valet entered, and by the manner in which he lingered in the room, as if willing to impart some tidings yet hesitating to do so, he saw that he waited for encouragement.

“ What news have you, Luigi ? ” said he, “ from Como—I saw you had letters as well as myself, perhaps you can tell me something, for my information is barren.”

“ Then the signor knows nothing ! ” replied the valet ; “ I thought so, or you would not be so

calm. There has been a fearful storm on the Lake and lives lost."

"Good Heaven!" exclaimed Loftus, "poor people! how often that happens at this time of the year! is the steamer injured or is it the small boats that have suffered?"

"A private boat, signor," replied Luigi, "that is, a single boat with one rower—the man washed overboard and drowned and the young lady too—there are many reports, but my correspondent wrote the night the accident occurred, and it was said other lives were lost as well—some say that it was all owing to Cristofero, whose new vessel has done great mischief on the Lake, and that he runs down and sails over everything he meets as he did this doomed one. It is thought he is arrested and sent to prison, and the vessel confiscated."

Mr. Loftus was extremely annoyed to hear this.

"I then, by my indulgent folly to a fellow I knew nothing of," exclaimed he, "have been the cause of this catastrophe! Is it known who the lady was?"

"No, signor, not exactly," said Luigi, "people say anything at first—one must not believe all—so I hope there can be no truth in the report of its being one of the ladies of the Villa Balbiano."

Edmond started to his feet as if electrified.

"I think not," said the frightened valet, "because she was alone, and those ladies never went out alone. I believe Miss Fane, the governess, is gone, signor ; Giulia told a friend of mine that Lady Seymour meant to send her off before Sir Anselm came back, so it could not be her either."

"Give orders for horses instantly," cried Loftus, "this news is too startling to sleep upon. Good God ! Sir Anselm evidently knew nothing of the event when he wrote. Lose no time, I shall continue my journey at once, I must ascertain the truth of these horrible reports."

From that time till he arrived at the Inn at Como, his mind was a prey to the most frightful agitation—Clara sent away ! what was the meaning of that ? could it indeed be she who had met with so sad a fate ! was it one of the sisters !—each of these surmises brought with it agony, and the nearer he arrived at the spot where his doubts could be dissipated, the more agitated his mind became.

CHAPTER XVI.

It is necessary to go back for a few chapters to the time when the accident just related had overtaken Clara Fane, and to relate that Cristofero had been proceeding quietly for some time with his building, determined, if possible, to have his boat completed by the time his truant master returned to Como. He had received from him a message directly after he had set out so suddenly, telling him that as soon as the pressing business that called him away was concluded, he should return and certainly remain for the winter in Italy.

He had been a good deal jeered by the boat-builders of Como, who held his powers in contempt, and he would, had he speculated on his own account, have been subject to as much enmity as he had encountered at Venice; but, as he was supposed to obey the caprice of an English master, his rivals contented themselves with

laughing at him, and overwhelming him with all the wit with which their *patois* furnished them. Cristofero, however, had a peculiar fondness for contention of all kinds, and was never so happy as when he had difficulties to overcome. He, therefore, resolutely continued his occupation, and saw with pride and satisfaction that all went on well.

At length the great deed was accomplished, and the Bermuda boat, which he christened "the Porgy," from some pleasing recollections he possessed of the ugliest fish on those his native coral seas, which produce the Angel fish, was launched on the lake.

He had laid a bet that his boat would, on the first day of her sailing, outstrip the steamer in swiftness, and it was on the morning appointed for Clara's leaving Balbiano that the match was to take place. A greater number of passengers than usual were on board the steamer; for the morning was peculiarly bright and pleasant, with a fresh breeze, and all things animated and inspiring; two men from Como were to have the honour of accompanying Cristofero, to whom he had explained the advantages and the mysteries of his craft: as one had been a mariner in the gulf of Genoa and had no particular interest in the Como people, he exulted in the preference shown him.

The Porgy and the steam boat accordingly started at the same time and had gone on in gallant style for a short distance, when the sudden storm, into the vortex of which Clara had fallen, overtook them.

The shriek she had uttered had been heard by those on board the steamer, but not an instant had been left for them to prevent the accident, which took place near that part of the lake where it divides into two arms, one leading to Lecco and the other towards Colico.

On went the steamer, the Captain conscious only of having gone over a small boat, which had been dashed across their course, but they saw not whether it contained any one; the Bermudian shot along after it, but the quick ears of Cristofero had heard a scream and his eagle eyes had seen the figure of a female for one minute, while in the next the broken fragments of the devoted bark strewed the waters round him.

As he rushed to the side, he perceived a form which had risen twice to the surface, and then sunk; he hesitated not a moment, but turning to his comrades in the vessel, exclaimed—"throw her up to the wind, haul the jib flat!" and with one spring leaped into the waves and dived—dived as only a native Bermudian can—and after an interval which appeared terribly long

to the two men, who, having hurrily obeyed his orders respecting the vessel, gazed upon the spot where he went down, he re-appeared, bearing in one arm the insensible body of a female. So vigorous were his efforts with his disengaged arm that he soon neared them, and was able to catch the rope they threw out, by means of which in a short time they drew him and his burthen along side, and dragged the former into the vessel.

"Thank God!" exclaimed Cristofero as he leaped in, "the sin is off my mind now!"

The nearest place to where the accident occurred was Varenna, and thither he accordingly shaped his course: all the inhabitants were on the steep shores looking, according to custom, at the steamer's progress, and watching the new craft which, for the first time, had that day appeared on the lake.

Cristofero, who had by this time recognised Clara, bore her in his arms at once to the villa of "Lord Anselmo," as Sir Anselm was called by the Comasques; for though he had never been there before himself nor heard another name for his master's friend, he was aware that some one known to Mr. Loftus resided, or was expected, there, and he decided at once that he should do right in claiming hospitality for his charge.

With the care of a nurse for an infant the faithful black stood by, while means were taken to restore Clara to consciousness, and when he found that they had succeeded his joy was so intense that it knew no bounds ; he promised the wealth of Potosi to all who helped the lady, whom his quick observation had long since told him was preferred by Mr. Loftus. And he at length left her in good keeping, scarcely caring to change his own wet garments, in order that he might hasten back to Balbiano and give information there of the accident.

The two sisters were sitting, as has been described, locked in each other's arms and overwhelmed with sorrow, when the Porgy's sail was descried by them, and added, by its appearance, to the misery they were suffering. They continued to look through their tears in the direction of its course, and soon observed that it came nearer.

“ Claudia !” exclaimed Sybilla, starting up ; “ Cristofero sees us—he waves a white handkerchief—he is making all sorts of signs—perhaps he has heard something and is come on purpose to tell us.”

“ Yes !” cried Claudia, “ he keeps waving and shouting to us—he has news—they cannot be

bad by his great animation. Let us fly down and speak to him from the terrace."

As she spoke, with simultaneous spring the sisters rushed together down the steps and had reached in a moment the lowest walk, beneath which the deep water permitted the impetuous Porgy to approach close to the parapet wall.

"All right!—all safe!" shouted Cristofero, as they leant over in breathless expectation; "Missie Fane is come to life—'Mudian just in time—nothing but wet jackets after all!"

And his exulting laugh showed that there was no fable in what he related.

With a loud scream of delight the young girls flew down the steps.

"Where is she?—take us to her, dear Cristofero!" said they simultaneously, "take us directly—we wont stop for anything."

"Missie Fane is at Lord Anselmo's villa at Varenna," said he, "but put on your shawls, piccaninnies—the evening is berry cold—run back and get them and the Porgy 'll take you there in the twinkling of an eye."

They were obliged to obey him, and having caught up the first shawls and cloaks they could find, the sisters came running back and were lifted by Cristofero into his boat before any one

had time to stop them or enquire the meaning of the visit of this extraordinary vessel, which carried off the young ladies with a speed quite unusual on the Lake of Como.

They soon reached Varenna, and never had the sisters climbed the steps of the orange and citron-shaded terraces with so much delight as they now did: with bounding steps and bright eyes, like young gazelles, they flew along, and unrestrained by the cautious entreaties of the nurse who guarded the apartment where Clara lay and informed them that she slept, they entered.

"Let us in! let us in!" said Claudia; "we will walk like flies, our steps shall not be heard, only we must be by her side—we must see her the moment she wakes, and we do not mean to go home till she is well. Cristofero will return for some of our servants and all we want—so prepare to have a good deal of trouble, for we mean to give everybody plenty."

So saying they crept softly into the room where the rescued Clara lay calmly sleeping, her face pale and worn, but with a smile on her countenance and without fever. For a whole hour the sisters sat by her bed side, silent and watchful, with their beautiful animated faces half shaded

by the curtains, for they feared to startle her if she woke suddenly and saw them.

At length she uttered a soft sigh and moved, and presently afterwards opened her eyes and gazed round her, as if trying to recognise her position.

"It is very strange," murmured she, as she raised herself on the pillow, "can it have been nothing but a dream?"

"No, dearest darling," exclaimed Claudia, leaning over her; "no, it is all too true—but it is true that you are safe and will soon be well. You are in dear Sir Anselm's house, we are not worthy that you should be in our's, and here we mean to stay till he comes himself. I have behaved very shamefully to you, and will never forgive myself."

Clara smiled, and said in a low voice—

"Kiss me, both of you, and let us only talk of the present; how came I here? you know my history better than I can tell it—it seems to me that the steam boat went over me and I was drowned."

"Now, stay quiet and do not speak," said Claudia, "while I tell you all about it. Cristofero, that dear old black, who is worth all the white men in the world, saved you in his charming Porgy, you remember how we laughed at him

for giving it such a name? he dived for you like a duck, as he is, and found you at the bottom of the lake. If it had not been for him I should never have laughed again.

"He has told us all his history as we came along, and has been laughing and crying as if he was a baby. It seems ages ago that everything happened, before we were born, for he says it is seventeen years since that he left Bermuda in charge of his master's little daughter, whose mamma had died: his wife was the child's nurse, which was about a year and a half old. They were bringing it to England, and were overtaken by just such a storm as this of to-day, only that it lasted a week and drove them from their course here and there in the open sea; at last the ship struck on a rock, and all on board perished but himself. He says he has had it on his mind ever since, that he did not let the waves wash him off the rocks, or that he did not throw himself into the sea after the little child, whom he, however, tried all in his power to save.

"He was always famous for building boats, and had made a little canoe such as they have in the West Indies of porcupine's quills stained, of all colours in patterns, with mottos worked in letters on the sides—how pretty it must be! this he made for the little child; it was not much bigger

than a cradle and would stand the sea well, for he had often tried it on the shore at Bermuda.

"When the storm was at the worst, and he saw they must be lost, he and his wife fastened the baby into this odd sort of boat with strong leather bands, after wrapping it in a great sea cloak round and round, for he thought it might float out to sea being so light, and get picked up or reach the shore somewhere.

"They had hardly done this when the ship split in two, and the confusion and terror were at the highest. He tried to save his poor wife, but she was washed overboard, as well as the little canoe, and he saw no more till he found himself in the cleft of a rock with the sea beating over him.

"From this position he was saved; but he said he had better have been drowned then, for the ship that picked him up was a slaver, and he has been bought and sold, and bought again over and over for seventeen years. Isn't it a curious story!—he says now that he has saved your life he shall be easier, for he thought it no better than murder not to have died for that little child, who was given to his charge. This we told him, of course, was nonsense, as he could not have saved it, but he has odd notions about it."

Clara had listened while Claudia related this history, with closed eyes, her lips occasionally murmuring as if in prayer—when she paused she made an effort to speak, and said at length, feebly—

“Did he tell the name of his master?”

“We were so anxious about you and your safety,” replied Claudia, “that we did not ask him—he seemed so excited too and so full of remorse for not saving the baby, that we were glad to make him attend to his boat and leave off talking.”

“I must see him,” exclaimed Clara raising herself, “I must get up and dress, and speak to him directly.”

The nurse here interposed and entreated that her patient might be kept quiet, and, after having received an assurance that she should see Cristoforo the next morning, directly she was sufficiently recovered to exert herself, Clara consented to be left to herself and the sisters retired to a chamber that had been prepared for them.

Exhausted with all the exertion she had gone through, both of mind and body, Clara fell into a sound sleep which continued the whole night, and when the bright sun broke into her chamber in the morning she felt comparatively well. Great stiffness in her limbs and extreme debility re-

mained, but all danger was past and she was able to leave her bed, and, seated in a large chair close to the terrace, could look far over the Lake, the scene of her late misadventure. Her first enquiry was if the boatman had been saved, and she rejoiced to hear that the poor fellow had contrived to swim to the shore though not without difficulty, and, having been taken care of by the villagers who found him, was doing well.

Claudia and Sybilla were soon at their post in attendance, and it was not long before the white sail of the proud Bermudian came shining along the waters and approached Varennna. Cristofero was immediately summoned to attend, and came smiling joyously to receive the thanks of the rescued Clara.

"Now, Cristofero," said she as calmly as she could, "I have a strange story to tell you, and I hope, poor as I am, a reward to offer far beyond all you could desire."

The Bermudian's brow contracted.

"What Missie," said he; "do you think Christopher Tucker wants reward for doing his duty? Bless your pretty face," he added, seeing her smile, "she didn't mean it."

"I did not mean the reward you think, Christopher," replied she, "if I had gold to give I feel you would not accept it although your due—

but I think I can restore to you your master's child."

The black started, and, trembling in every limb, threw himself on his knees before her.

"Tell me if there was not a motto worked on the canoe you made with quills—what was it?"

"I worked it myself in red and black," exclaimed Cristofero, "they were three German words; my dear mistress loved them, and I did it to please my poor master after she died. The words were

"Trau. Schau. Wem."

Clara leant back and gasped for breath.

"Now hear my story," said she, "but first know that that canoe is at this moment in the museum at Liverpool."

"Have you seen it!" exclaimed Christopher leaping up, "and the baby—the blessed child of my poor mistress—"

"Is alive," said Clara, "and well, though but for you she would now be a corpse at the bottom of the Lake of Como."

At these words the Bermudian, with a loud cry, threw himself again at the feet of Clara, and, seizing her hands, covered them with kisses, sobbing and laughing by turns.

"Dear little piccaninny!" cried he, "grown into a beautiful woman—grown into an angel—

oh, my poor master—he died of grief, he died of grief, or what a comfort for him."

"Alas," said Clara, turning very pale, "did my father die?—how did you hear that, Cristofero?"

"I never heard it," replied he, "but he did, he must, he adored that babe, and he said to me when he gave it into my arms—'If I lose my child it will kill me, I have nothing left besides.'"

"Tell me his name!" gasped Clara, pressing her hands tightly on her heart.

"He was called," replied Cristofero, "Sir Anselm Fairfax."

Clara fell back on her chair, while the sisters screamed in accord—

"Milor Anselmo! Cristofero—it is Milor Anselmo to whose house you have brought his daughter."

The raptures of Christopher on this announcement were so great that he could scarcely be kept in bounds. He leaped, he cried, he clapped his hands, and ran hither and thither in an extacy of joy impossible to express, a joy which was shared by all who saw its effects on him.

"Oh, my dear governess," cried Claudia, clasping Clara in her arms, "then your name is not Clara Fane after all!"

"She is Agnes Fairfax—she is Agnes like her mother," screamed Cristofero.

"Always Clara for you, my darlings!" exclaimed Clara, pressing them together to her heart. "I have thought of this, dreamt of this, hoped it, doubted and tried to drive away the happy vision—from the time Sir Anselm told me the sorrows of his early life, when we were seated together in the steam boat on the Danube. I did not dare to tell him my anxious surmise, for fear I should have again deceived myself, as I had already done on another occasion. Oh, when will he return—Claudia, write at once to him, tell him to delay no longer, or this joy will kill both me and Cristofero before he is here to share it."

CHAPTER XVII.

Joy must have sorrow—sorrow must have joy.

Goëthe.

SIR ANSELM FAIRFAX was just on the point of leaving Milan with his sister-in-law, the Countess Altheim, who was now sufficiently recovered to travel when he received the following letter from Claudia.

“Now,” it began, “dearest Sir Anselm, do not expect to have any reasonable communication from wild people such as we are, but obey implicitly the commands I lay upon you. The very moment you get this letter set out instantly for Como; do not delay except to read it, and then never stop till you arrive at your own villa at Varenna. Do not pause at Balbiano, it is useless—we are not there, we are installed in your house, leaving just room for you and the Countess Altheim, to whom pray explain that she will learn

something quite extraordinary on her arrival. Tell her to be prepared to meet a relation she never saw, and to make up her mind to love that relation as well as we expect you will. Now, do not put down this letter because you are busy, saying, ‘these children write such nonsense not worth attending to.’ No, you will thank us and kiss us and almost worship us, when you come and find all we have done for you.

“Mr. Loftus has got such a beautiful boat built on the Lake—we never go out in any other now, nor will you when you see it, and the boatman is ——; but I dare not tell you a word, although I shall never have done talking when once I have you in my power. If you know where Mr. Loftus is pray write and tell him to return as quickly as possible, but first of all come yourself—oh, my dear Lord Anselmo ! if you only knew what I *could* tell you !

“Do not expect to find Clara Fane here when you arrive : she is gone and we never expect to see her again.”

The last part of this letter surprised Sir Anselm more than all the rest, and he was extremely annoyed at such news.

“I fear,” he thought, “Lady Seymour has been doing something foolish. What can this heedless child mean ? I thought as she approached

womanhood she would become more reasonable, but she seems fallen back into babyhood again. I must take her a doll from Milan instead of a husband, as I hoped."

But as he read and reread Claudia's letter he began to smile, imagining he had discovered the mystery attempted in her words.

"I see it," said he; "Clara Fane is gone—gone, perhaps, with Loftus. Can he have carried her off after all? he has kept his secret well, and only written to me on melancholy subjects—from England too—it can hardly be so! and yet, 'we never expect to see her again,' the enigma is too easy. We shall see—at all events, I shall gratify them by arriving as soon as they can possibly expect, and this wondrous web will be unravelled forthwith."

He thought little more about the affair after his first surprise, and did not particularly hurry himself on his journey, pausing at Monza longer than there was any necessity for doing to revisit the Duomo, which he knew well, and patiently to allow of the exhibition of Queen Theodolinda's relics—Chioccia and all.

Leisurely did his carriage drive through the beautiful and luxuriant country, which woos the traveller on towards the silver Lake of his rest; and often did he pause to point out to his interest-

ing companion, the Countess Altheim, the picturesque groups of mulberry-pickers with their long wicker baskets, and the pretty assemblages of peasant girls collected round an overflowing village fountain, their luxuriant hair confined by an auriole of those shining pins which give their heads the effect of Raphael's saints surrounded by a glory.

At last this character of rural beauty was changed to one of refinement: hanging gardens and enclosed parks greeted their view, and the venerable walls of feudal Como rose solemn and menacing before them as they descended into the old town, and were presently greeted by the glittering lake guarded by its sentinels of purple mountains.

For an hour Sir Anselm remained at the hotel while the Countess reposed after her journey and he was strolling along the shore, importuned by the clamorous boatmen to choose one of their gaily adorned boats to convey him to Varenna, when his eye was suddenly caught by a white sail just leaving the commodious little harbour, and catching the reflection of an evening sun on its lofty mast.

"Can this be Loftus's boat," exclaimed he, "of which Claudia speaks? he has profited wonderfully by my descriptions and my sketches, if

he has been able to direct so perfect a Bermudian to be constructed. But no—it is guided by one too well acquainted with the powers of those beautiful sailors to be a stranger to the seas. None but a native could make the little vessel perform such feats as that—no wonder the Comasques are amazed and follow it with their gaze, it is long since I beheld such a sight, and," he added, turning sadly away, "I never wished to see it more."

After a short time, as the Countess expressed a wish to go on without further delay, Sir Anselm hired a boat and they proceeded on their tranquil and delightful voyage by weather so calm and pleasant that they could scarcely have believed the accounts they heard of the recent storm and its accidents, but for occasional traces of uprooted trees and dislodged rocks along the banks.

As they approached Varenna Sir Anselm observed in the distance the white sail of the Porgy hovering about, bent on exhibiting the feats it could perform on the water.

"That is the new boat," said one of the men, "which saved the young English lady the other day in the storm."

Sir Anselm watched it with still more interest after this, and was watching it when they ran into

Varennna, and he was called upon to welcome the Countess to her home.

Scarcely had they ascended many of the steps leading to the terrace gardens when they were greeted by several musical screams, but no one appeared, till, having reached the last platform, they were met by the sisters who flew together to meet them, and uttered a thousand confused expressions of delight, which amused the Countess as much as Sir Anselm.

"Your countrywomen are always *naïve*," said Madame Altheim, who was a little stately and grave, "but these pretty creatures seem positively wild."

"They are much more so than ordinarily," said Sir Anselm, a little disappointed at the impression they had made, "we must attribute it to the right cause—affectionate feeling. I flatter myself I create much interest in their hearts."

"That," said the Countess kindly, "does not surprise me; but see, they fly and bound away like young fawns; they cannot be kept in one place, they have disappeared into an inner room and now they re-appear leading some one. Good God! it is indeed as you told me," she exclaimed suddenly, as the sisters approached with Clara between them, "what a fatal resemblance!" and the Countess hid her face in her hands and wept.

Sir Anselm advanced to meet Clara.

"What could my amiable friend Claudia mean?" said he; "her letter announced to me the sad tidings of your departure. There seem many enigmas for me to solve, and this is not the least."

"I spoke truth," said Claudia; "Clara Fane exists no more—ask her if I am right."

"Sir Anselm," said Clara, "I have had a great escape; but for an old and faithful servant of yours I should have been drowned in the lake. Do you remember Christopher Tucker?"

Sir Anselm turned very pale and sat down.

"What of him?" he faltered.

Clara took his hand and pointing towards the lake she said—

"Do you see that long, white sail?—he who guides it is an old servant of yours—many years have passed since you met:—he was thought to have been lost at sea—with others—he was providentially saved."

"But my child—my poor little Agnes, what became of her?" exclaimed Sir Anselm.

"He shall tell you," said Clara, "if you will summon resolution to see and speak to him."

"This instant," cried he: "Countess Altheim, she speaks of the man of whom I have been telling you—who, devoted to your sister, I supposed

had lost his life in my service, together with my child."

"But my poor Agnes!" sobbed the Countess, "she is lost to us without hope."

The sisters, while Clara was speaking, had hurried to the terrace and were busy making a signal agreed on between them and Christopher, which was, at any time, to bring him within call. His sail was soon seen approaching, and Sir Anselm, gazing with the rest, beheld the Porgy cleave the waters and run into a little creek beneath the villa stairs, when Christopher leapt on shore and was soon seen mounting the steps to the chamber where the party were assembled.

Clara advanced to meet him.

"Christopher," she said, "you have promised me to be calm when you meet your master: the time is now come to prove your resolution—Sir Anselm Fairfax stands before you!"

Christopher advanced, looked round and with a shriek of joy fell into his master's arms.

"I have saved her—I have saved little Missie!" was his first exclamation; "for seventeen years the load was on my heart—for seventeen years I wished to die, because I had not followed her when the last wave broke over the canoe—there she is at last. God preserved the dear child for

my master. I dived for her to the bottom of the lake and now I may be forgiven."

Sir Anselm required no further explanation—he at once recognised the secret so impossible to be concealed by all those who longed to tell it.

As he clasped Clara to his heart, he asked no further proof, for that heart had long named her as his daughter, and this discovery only confirmed the truth of the sympathy which had attracted him to her.

"Explain no more," said he, "another time you shall tell me the particulars of this strange romance. Oh, Agnes! my sweet child, was I not right to love you from the first! Oh, Christopher—faithful to death—have I not well fulfilled the motto I adopted—Examine, prove, and trust."

"The motto is on my boat," exclaimed Christopher. "I painted it with my own hand, and in my first voyage it led me to good luck."

"Countess Altheim," said Sir Anselm, "you will now forgive the *étourderie* of my dear young friends and embrace them together with your neice, our lost Agnes."

The Countess, overcome with emotion, did not require the injunctions of her brother-in-law to receive Clara with affection, for if she had been impressed with the singular wildness and beauty

of her two companions, she had been no less so with the prepossessing appearance of her whom she had now to recognise as her niece.

Explanation quickly followed on explanation, and in spite of the attempts of all to calm their agitated feelings, they could not attempt to separate till they had formed a circle round Clara, by which familiar name it was impossible for them not to continue to call her, and had listened to all she could tell respecting what she knew of herself.

"What I know of my infancy," said she, "is this. I was brought up from the age of about a year and a half by the wife of a small trader of Liverpool. He was called Captain Love, and was part owner of a vessel trading to the West Indies. He was full of enterprise, activity and industry, and had had a career of almost uninterrupted success in his undertakings: he was in every way worthy of his excellent wife Susey, one of the best and most benevolent of women, whom he had married for love and to whom he was much attached. They had no children, which was a source of regret to them; but at length, when Susey became the mother of a little girl, Captain Love and herself were extremely happy, and thought no greater good luck could crown their domestic bliss. This child was christened Clara, and was about a year old

when it was seized with the small pox and carried off, almost to the despair of the parents, who were so attached to it that the Captain could hardly resolve to pursue his customary employment and delayed going to sea much longer than ordinary after the sad event.

" When his wife Susey found that he took the loss of their child so much to heart, she saw the necessity of his being actively employed, and, regardless of herself, persuaded him to resume his customary life and go out once more to the West Indies. Accordingly he left her, and made several voyages—the last had reference to me.

" He was on his voyage home, and had encountered a series of storms which, however, his little vessel had weathered, and it was after one which had caused him some danger and alarm that he was continuing his route in the direction of England when one evening, as he stood on deck, his attention was arrested by the appearance on the waves of an object so unusual that he surveyed it for some time through his glass, unable to comprehend what it might be. It came, however, floating on, and he ordered grappling irons to be thrown out to catch it, whatever it were. This was soon accomplished by his men, who had been regarding it with the same curiosity as himself.

The surprise of all was great when they dis-

covered that the prize which they hauled on board was a small Indian canoe, made of porcupine's quills, very firmly and ingeniously plaited, having on it a motto of three words which they did not understand ; but a greater wonder was to find within it, wrapped carefully in a wollen cloak and lashed strongly to a seat in the centre an infant apparently dead.

" The child was immediately unbound and the Captain himself took charge of it, using all the means he could think of to restore animation, and at length, to the great joy of his crew, who watched and assisted his benevolent cares, the unfortunate infant showed signs of life. It was, however, so nearly exhausted, apparently from long exposure without sustenance, that it required extraordinary attention to preserve its life : these were not spared, and by the time Captain Love arrived at Liverpool the child was comparatively recovered.

" He carried this singular marine treasure to his wife Susey, whose compassionate feelings were instantly aroused, and she did not for an instant hesitate to adopt the foundling as her own, and give it all the care she had bestowed on her lost darling. I need not tell you that I am that child. I was christened Clara, after the infant that had died, and the name of Fane was given me merely because it

was that of Susey before her marriage. You remember that I have adopted the motto which is so familiar to you and which I had never met with till I found it was yours. I had it engraved on a bracelet as the only memorial I have of those by whose wish I imagined it was attached to the little vessel in which I was drifted out to sea. These words, now dearer than ever to me —*Trau. schau. wem.*—were worked in different coloured quills on the side of the canoe in which I was found. I seemed, therefore, to cling to them as my own property, since to anything besides, even the name by which I was called, I had no right.

“ My beloved nurse, dear to me now as ever, would never have resigned the care of me had she not seen that the patronage afforded me by Mrs. Fowler, of which I have already told you, would be more likely to advance my fortunes than any plan she could form—and she has proved herself right in her idea.

“ Oh, my dear father!—what a blessing to utter that word!—you are rich and generous and I shall now be an expensive charge to you, for you will reward those who so generously spent their little saving upon a destitute stranger thrown upon their compassion. Great stores of love I have for all with which to repay them myself.

Where to begin I scarcely know, so many friendly faces are smiling in the rapid vision of the past that flits before my eyes at this moment besides those whom I see around me. Eugenie—Miss Clinton—divide my thoughts with Susey Love and Mrs. Fowler—and poor, lost Maria."

Agitated and happy, the whole party at length separated, more from consideration for the delicacy of the Countess Altheim than from their own inclinations, and each awoke the next morning scarcely certain whether so great a joy could be real—just as those feel who have undergone a terrible grief, but wake, alas! to know that the blow was not imaginary—so much alike are joy and sorrow in this world, where events the most unlike in appearance resemble each other but too nearly.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Marry, this well carried, shall on her behalf,
Change slander to remorse : that is some good.

Much Ado about Nothing.

WHILE these events were going on on the opposite side of the Lake, Lady Seymour remained at Balbiano in a state of much agitation and alarm. The flight of the two young ladies in the Porgy had greatly added to her uneasiness, and, having no other means of venting her annoyance, she thought it best to indulge in a series of hysterical fits, induced by fear in the first instance, and afterwards from mortification at the accounts of Claudia's determined conduct reported to her by Giulia, and still renewed when the escapade performed by the sisters became known to her.

The news of the safety of Clara was rapidly spread, and the servants had even seen those who had had interviews with the rescued boatman,

therefore her remorse on that head was removed, and she had only now to consider what the best mode would be to divide the friends whom this incident would, she foresaw, only more closely unite, and she felt her pride engaged not to submit to the dictation of a governess and two children, over whom she considered that she had a right to exercise authority.

"Miss Fane," said she to Giulia, who stood sulkily by, "shall most assuredly not return here, but I must endeavour to persuade those unruly girls to come back. Their going to take possession of Sir Anselm's house is a breach of a etiquette, and must not be persisted in. As for that detestable black man, whose very aspect was always inimical to my nerves, I shall apply to the police if he dares again to approach this villa. Positively he is a sort of pirate, and I am surprised at Mr. Loftus for encouraging him."

"They say on the lake, milady," said Giulia, "that he was obliged to leave Venice in consequence of the number of murders he had committed. He does not care for life a bit, or else why should he have jumped, in that foolhardy way, into the water to save a person like Miss Fane, who was not likely to pay him for his trouble."

"If he comes here again, Giulia," exclaimed Lady Seymour, "I insist on his not being allowed

to land. I am quite terrified at the creature, and will permit no communication with him. I wish Sir Anselm would return : you sent my letter to him of course ?”

Giulia protested that she had done so, having the letter alluded to, at that moment, in her apron pocket, all recollection of her duty having escaped her recollection in the bustle of the last few days. To save her conscience, she therefore sent it to the post by the usual messenger to Como as soon as it was brought to her mind, but by this delay it did not reach Milan till after Sir Anselm had left, and was arrived at his own villa at Varennna.

The day after his arrival, the excitement of their minds having a little subsided, Sir Anselm willingly accepted the offer of Cristofero—for the sisters insisted on his keeping his Italian denomination as more poetical than the name of Christopher—to sail in the Porgy to the villa Balbiano, in order to explain and offer apologies, which he felt were necessary to Lady Seymour, for the desertion of her nieces and the sudden break up of the establishment.

He was not, however, prepared for the reception which awaited the approach of the Bermudian vessel: instead of the usual open gates at the foot of the steps leading to the never

closed doors of the hall, he found them locked and every blind and window closed.

Finding that neither ringing nor calling were of any avail, and that it was evident Lady Seymour had barricaded her castle, he was perplexed what to do, till Claudia, who accompanied him, proposed that they should land on a little strip of shore at the other side of the villa and make their entrance by a back gate, which led into a lower garden attached to the servant's offices.

"This is quite an adventure," said she, "to be shut out of one's house in this manner, and Auntie Seymour acting the heroine as if she was shut up in a tower, menaced by giants or the evil spirits of the Lake. There will, however, be no difficulty in effecting our entrance this way."

She accordingly preceded Sir Anselm, and they soon reached the little door which introduced them to the servant's department of the villa, all of whom were not a little scared when they saw them.

"How is this," said Sir Anselm, "that we find all the doors closed and no one to let us in?"

"Miladi ordered that we were never to leave the gates open for fear of black Cristofero, the pirate," replied one of the attendants looking very much alarmed.

"You are safe from him," replied Sir Anselm, "but we are not, I hope, to be looked upon as foes. Let Lady Seymour know that your young mistress and I are here and waiting till she admits us."

They were accordingly ushered into the presence of Lady Seymour, who uttered a scream of delight on welcoming Sir Anselm. She looked coldly at Claudia, who ran up to her, exclaiming—

"Now, dear auntie, don't give us a scene—you know it is you who are in the wrong, and everybody else has been quite right. But to please you Miss Fane is sent away, and you will never more be troubled with her."

"My beloved niece!" cried Lady Seymour, as she embraced her; "your heart, I know, is always warm and true to your best friend, who has so long devoted herself to you both. But, you should not have run off so abruptly with that hateful black creature—his character is one of the most worthless—he has, I am told, committed murder, and the thought of my darlings in the power of such a frightful brigand has deprived me nearly of life. Inconsiderate child! what sorrows do you cause me!"

"Cristofero is no brigand," replied Claudia, laughing heartily, "as Sir Anselm can tell you,

for he has known him all his life ; but we came to apologise and make friends, and tell you that Countess Altheim is not well enough to call on you to-day, but will come soon and bring Miss Fairfax with her."

"Who is Miss Fairfax ? my dear Claudia," said Lady Seymour, "so much happens in a few hours lately that I am really unable to follow the march of events. I never heard of the lady."

"Claudia speaks of my daughter Agnes," said Sir Anselm, "whom her aunt will shortly have the pleasure of introducing to you."

Lady Seymour looked astonished.

"You are about to say that you did not know I had so near a relative," continued he, "the fact is I only knew it myself a few hours ago, and it is to Cristofero, whom you suspect of being so dangerous a character, that I owe the greatest blessing of my life."

"Well," said Lady Seymour, "I suppose we are in Carnival time, and are playing dramas to amuse each other. I rejoice Sir Anselm at anything which gratifies you, and I confess that I think there is cause for congratulation above all other things in the departure of the late governess of these dear girls. When I tell you my reasons for dismissing her I am sure you will approve of

my conduct, which I see even the rebellious angel here acknowledges was right."

"Oh, quite right, sweet auntie," said her niece; "Clara Fane was a deception throughout—she was taking us in all the time, and we are so glad to get rid of her. Who knows if she might not have stolen the hearts of Lord Clairmont, Mr. Loftus, and Sir Anselm, all three, and in that case all our plans and schemes would have been defeated. Sir Anselm is just as glad as I am to have done with her. Speak the truth now, Lord Anselmo—are you not?"

"Certainly I am, in the sense you intend," replied Sir Anselm, "but why should we mystify Lady Seymour further?"

"Stop, stop," exclaimed Claudia, putting her hand on his mouth, "I insist on your saying no more."

"You have some secret, I perceive," said Lady Seymour, "but I am the most unsuspecting of beings, anybody may deceive me, witness my confidence in that Miss Fane!"

"Will you allow my young guests to remain with my daughter and her aunt," said Sir Anselm, "for a day or two? and if you feel equal to it we shall be charmed to receive your visit first if you please—do not delay long, I entreat, as I am

anxious that you should be one in our enjoyment."

Lady Seymour allowed them to depart with the promise they exacted, but as she had no particular anxiety to see her plans destroyed by the introduction of two relatives of Sir Anselm, of whom she knew nothing and whom she considered quite intruders, she resolved to be in no hurry to visit Varennia, and from day to day sent messages to say that indisposition prevented her throwing herself into the arms of Miss Fairfax, who she assured her in a note she

"Already doted on: my sweet unknown friend!" she said, "when your worthy father has told you of the respect in which I hold his exalted character, and the adoration, which amounts almost, I fear, to weakness, with which I regard my nieces, you will conceive the heart which beats to know you, and to indulge in an effusion of affection such as it already feels capable of towards you—alas! my sweet *inconnue*, how deeply I regret that the strength of my frame is not equal to that of my spirit, which flies to you and welcomes you to our lake. In a short time I hope to repeat in person all I now so feebly express."

Clara was excessively entertained when this note was delivered to her, and could not resist

showing it to her amused pupils, for as this was the only revenge she intended to take on Lady Seymour, besides the mortification of a recognition, she thought it but legitimate to indulge in a *petite malice* which could not injure her.

A few days had passed, and as the Countess Altheim felt much better and quite able to make the exertion, it was agreed that Cristofero's boat should row the party to the villa Balbiano: as there was no wind the tall sail was not in requisition, and when they reached the steps the obnoxious vessel was not recognised, so that they found no barricades to prevent their admission.

Claudia and her sister entered first and found their aunt closeted, as usual, with her easel, though Clark being out on an excursion, nothing active was going on. She expressed herself delighted to receive the Countess and the rest of the party.

"But tell me, Claudia," said she, "what sort of person is this suddenly-sprung-up Miss Fairfax—it seems to me an odd story altogether."

"So it is, auntie," replied Claudia: "and as for the daughter I do not think you will like her much—"

At this moment Sir Anselm and the Countess entered, with Clara rather in the rear, as she did not wish, by her presence, to disturb the first in-

troduction. As soon as that was over the Countess turned round, and taking her by the hand presented her as a stranger to Lady Seymour.

"This is my niece, the long-lost daughter of my dear sister Agnes, the wife of whom her husband was so early deprived: she tells me that she is already known to you, but not under her present circumstances."

The confusion and amazment of Lady Seymour was painful to witness as she looked at Clara again and again, unable to believe what she heard.

"I do not understand this travesty," exclaimed she; "surely you cannot be speaking the truth!"

"Perfectly so, my dear madam," said Sir Anselm; "you have only to call Cristofero as a corroborator of all that we assert—he has twice saved my daughter from a watery grave, and he can tell you the whole particulars of this singular history. I beg you to extend the civility Clara Fane met with from you to Agnes Fairfax."

"Upon my word," began Lady Seymour, "I feel quite ashamed, Miss Fairfax, that my sensitive delicacy should have obliged me in a late affair to act in a manner which might at a first glance appear a little harsh; but the duties I have to perform, where these dear children are concerned, are such that—that—"

"Oh, I entreat," said Clara, interrupting her, "that nothing may ever be remembered by any of us in future but the agreeable part of our intercourse, of which there have been so many scenes, that it is useless to dwell on any that may be less brilliant. I have little but obligation to any one in this family to recollect, and I readily excuse any faults towards myself which arose from zeal intended to point to a good end."

"We are, then, I hope, reconciled, my sweet Miss Fairfax," exclaimed Lady Seymour, embracing her; "how could it be otherwise with the daughter of my best [and one of my oldest friends! My faults, I assure you, are those merely of the head—the heart, the heart, dear Miss Fane—Fairfax—is always in the right."

"Oh yes, auntie," interposed Sybilla, laughing, "we all know you quite well, so there is no occasion to make any more fine speeches; the Countess will think perhaps we are not sincere if we profess so much."

"Saucy angel!" said Lady Seymour, patting her cheek; "I fear the Countess will see that I spoil you; but I am too fond to be severe, and these lovely rebels get the better of me."

CHAPTER XIX.

Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie
Which we ascribe to Heaven—the fated sky
Gives us full scope. * * * Who ever strove
To show her merit that did miss her love?

Shakespere.

EDMOND LOFTUS's arrival at Como took place about ten days after that of Sir Anselm. It was by that time known that the accident on the lake had not been fatal, and he was relieved from his terrors respecting the ladies of Balbiano; but so many confused accounts were spread abroad that he was at a loss to understand what had really occurred.

The first person he saw belonging to him was Cristofero, who came sailing into the little harbour soon after his arrival; but from him the information he obtained was by no means satisfactory, for he had been charged by Claudia and Sybilla to keep entirely secret the history they wished themselves to reveal. The task imposed was a

difficult one, as Cristofero was in a state of excitement which made him ready to tell everything he knew to everybody he met. When questioned by Mr. Loftus his answers were so wild and incoherent that he could make little of them.

"Is it true, Cristofero, that you ran down the boat with the lady in it?" asked he.

"No," was the reply; "I picked her up after the steamer had gone over her."

"And who was she, and what became of her afterwards?—she seems to me to have been a mere 'Lady of the Lake.'"

"She is Sir Anselm Fairfax's daughter—a beautiful young lady. I put the baby in the canoe and lashed it tight and trusted it to the sea—the sea was faithful, though I was not—that's my secret, master—that's why I ought to have been drowned long ago;—but she was saved by me after all—so there wasn't much harm done. Such a beautiful young lady!"

"I was afraid it was one of the ladies from Balbiano," said Mr. Loftus; "are they all safe and well?"

"The two piccaninies are," returned Christopher, "and Lady Seymour—"

"And—and the governess?" said Edmond.

"Oh, she—she's gone—Miss Clara Fane is gone clean away."

"Well Christopher," said his master, "let me have a specimen of your sailing—your boat looks admirably, but whether it is suited to these waters remains to be proved, though you do not acknowledge to having caused this accident. Take me once to the Villa Balbiano."

Cristofero smiled, showed his white teeth and shook his head.

"No, no," said he, "you are not to go there; the piccaninies told me to bring you, at once, to Varenna—they stay there now with the Countess Altheim and Missie Fairfax."

"As you please," replied Loftus, smiling; "I suppose I must obey—there is some mystification which I don't comprehend, but it will probably develope itself in due time."

They accordingly set forth, and the animation of the sail raised the spirits of Edmond not a little in spite of the uncertainty he felt respecting Clara. When they reached Varenna, he was welcomed by the sisters with rapturous delight, and almost carried in triumph up the steep stairs of the terraces.

"Why are you both in such extraordinary spirits?" said he at length; "is it because you have no longer a governess to keep you in order?—is it true that Miss Fane is gone?"

"Yes," exclaimed Claudia; "that is the very

reason—but you will not be glad, I know, for I found out that you were in love with her, and, what's more, I know she was dying in love with you, and would have given the world to marry you, if you would have had her."

Loftus's brow became crimson.

"Claudia," said he, "you talk at random of you know not what. You are dreaming. But why did she go away?—it seems to me a very extraordinary event—you were all good friends when I left."

"Lady Seymour and she quarrelled, and I quarrelled with her too, and Sir Anselm didn't like her to stay, and so—there's an end of Clara Fane."

"But you seemed so attached to her," pursued Mr. Loftus: "I cannot account for such sudden changes of sentiment."

"Oh, she was only a governess, you know—not much better than one's maid," said Claudia, looking sly. "I dare say now, you would not have liked to marry her for that very reason—would you now?—you'd like better to have a grander lady for your wife."

"Don't let us speak any more of her," said Loftus; "we do not understand each other on this subject."

"Poor girl!" said Claudia, "it does seem

shocking that everybody is glad she is gone. Oh ! here comes Sir Anselm."

So saying she flew past, laughing loud and waving her hand as she disappeared.

" My dear Loftus," said Sir Anselm, you are come at a moment when I require the support of a friend to carry me through a great excitement. My whole life is changed in the brief interval of your departure, and, except one sorrow, I have nothing now that weighs upon my heart—my child is restored to me."

Loftus embraced his friend with tears, and entreated to hear the particulars.

" To you I am mainly indebted for this good," said Sir Anselm, " for it was your patronage of Christopher that brought this happy event to light. He is my old Bermuda servant, and he it is who saved my daughter. Ah ! Edmond, I have such visions rising in my mind respecting that daughter !—if you could love her, if you could make her your ideal—and she is all that a father or a lover could desire—how happy we might all become."

" My dear friend," exclaimed Loftus, " I shall seem even more unreasonable now to you than ever—ungrateful too, I fear, when I confess that the image of Clara Fane is so deeply printed in my soul that no other could find a place in my

affections. I am even at this moment, while I rejoice in your happiness, most miserable about her. You knew my weakness, yet you have yourself caused this anxiety, for Claudia tells me it is by your desire that she has left them. Where is she? I must seek her, I must put an end to this wretched uncertainty at once."

Sir Anselm smiled as he answered.

"My reasons were good in desiring that Clara Fane should no longer remain in her late position —be satisfied that she is cared for, but do not regret her—her rank and circumstances were not such as to render her suitable to you, and, knowing your temper as I do, I feel certain when you see her no more that she will fade from your memory. Do not prejudice yourself, meanwhile, against Agnes Fairfax; she is not a person to be seen without admiration or lightly rejected. I have a presentiment that you will be friends in time."

"I do not doubt it for a moment," cried Lof-tus; "I should be the most insensible of beings if it were not so—present me to her, and let me have my part in the general satisfaction which her marvellous apparition has caused. You forget that I am taken by surprise and have not the least idea how she was recovered after so many years.

Did the Countess Altheim bring her to light?— or how did so interesting an event occur?"

"She shall tell her history herself," replied Sir Anselm.

The friends accordingly entered the drawing-room of the villa where Loftus was presented to the Countess Altheim, and presently the sisters appeared and each taking a hand led him through a suite of rooms to a boudoir at the end, where seated on a sofa, with her back towards him, he beheld one whose figure he could not for an instant mistake.

He started and uttered an exclamation of surprise, when Agnes Fairfax rose and advanced to meet him.

Claudia and Sybilla clapped their hands, the former crying out—

"There, I told you all true, this is Miss Fairfax, and Clara Fane is left at the bottom of the Lake."

So saying they both ran out of the room, leaving the lovers together.

There was no longer any disguise necessary to either, the explanation that immediately followed brought to light every long suppressed feeling, all those

"Gentle wishes long subdued,
Subdued and cherished long."

on the part of Agnes, and a confirmation of all he had before professed on that of Edmond, and when they entered the drawing room together and were greeted by the whole party, their countenances told Sir Anselm that all obstacles to the union he desired were at an end.

In the Museum at Liverpool may still be seen a small canoe, curiously formed of porcupine's quills, the same that was recognised by Christopher Tucker and Sir Anselm Fairfax as made by the former at Bermuda, and in which he placed the infant Agnes; its identity was proved by Captain Love and his wife Susey, and it was afterwards exhibited to Mr. and Mrs. Loftus on their first visit after their marriage to the foster father and mother of the bride.

It was agreed between them that every year on the anniversary of Captain Love's adventure on the high seas that and several following days should be spent at Loftus Hall, Captain Richard Love of the Gmunden See being included in the invitation, as he was now located in the neighbourhood of his brother.

The bridal excursion was extended to the Vale of Llangollen, when Sir Anselm had the satisfaction of returning his heartfelt thanks to Mrs. Fowler and her invalid sister, for the maternal

care bestowed on his daughter. Every summer they paid a visit to the beautiful Vale of the Dee, much to the delight of the amiable sisters, who continued to reside there ; and in process of time Claudia, Lady Clairmont, and Sybilla, Countess Altheim, were introduced to the Welsh hills, which, in their enthusiasm, they pronounced equal to the Tyrol.

Many a pic-nic and many a long morning's sketching did the grey ruins of Dinas Bran witness as the brides, attended by their old friend Clark, whose pencil they still employed, took their exalted station amongst the dilapidated walls which yet crowned the fine mountain, whose crumbling diadem rises over the lovely valley beneath. One whole summer the happy party spent in that vale which combine every beauty that Wales encloses in her bosom, and not a day passed that they did not enjoy anew the pleasures the unsurpassed rural nature around them offered. They had secured a group of temporary domiciles, scattered over the hills and by the river's side, and thus formed a neighbourhood for themselves within a short walk one of the other.

Here they scarcely regretted their inability to return to Como and their villas there—a plan which they had proposed, but were arrested in the execution of by the revolutionary earthquake

which overturned all the projects of continental travel throughout Europe, and drove the restless seekers after excitement which abound in England to the Scotch lakes and Welsh mountains, the novelty of which gave them charms in the eyes of tourists which enhanced their real attractions.

It was in the midst of those secluded shades, where all was peaceful and at rest, seated in soft concealment, where Val Crucis Abbey nestles, or climbing to the heathery summit of the rocky Eglwseg, or winding along the gorse-covered hills behind the groves and meadows of Llantysilio, that this company of friends and lovers passed a holiday-existence, never hereafter to be forgotten in the cares which the future was inevitably preparing, but of which they would not then allow themselves to dream.

Here they listened at a distance to details of those mighty events which were sweeping away dynasties;—here they heard of beautiful Naples deluged in blood—of fertile Lombardy overrun with armed myriads—of treasure-filled Vienna threatened with destruction—of great kings exiled, and mighty emperors flying for their lives, and of old friends and once gay acquaintances reduced to poverty or made victims by a furious multitude, and they turned towards each other, and gazed upon their tranquil retreat scarcely believing it

possible that they could themselves have escaped the dangers which had overtaken and destroyed persons and scenes so well known to them and so recently visited.

Amongst numerous episodes of the revolutionary romance, new chapters of which they were constantly reading, Mr. and Mrs. Loftus were startled with one in which they recognised an actor whose very existence they desired should be unknown to their less experienced companions.

A young woman had appeared on the stage in Paris, soon after the downfall of the late monarchy, whose beauty and genius had become instantly the theme of admiration to all the devotees of the wild and extravagant. She was reported to be a native of South America, and her singular habits, which it soon became the fashion amongst the ladies of the popular cause to adopt, were thought to give peculiar piquancy to her character. She could smoke like a turk, ride like an Englishman and throw the lasso as well as the most skilful of her supposed countrymen: she understood the language of the gypseys, and by many was thought to belong to that wild race of wanderers. Her voice in singing was deep and full, and possessed a mysterious charm, unlike any that had ever before been heard on the French stage: she sang the newest republican songs in character,

and created, by her powerful manner of acting them, an indescribable *furor* amongst her excitable audience.

For several weeks she was looked upon as a goddess, and the wildness of enthusiasm exhibited towards her by her admirers knew no bounds. Every tongue raved of “La Celia,” every heart beat for “La Divine Celia,” every hand showered roses at the feet of the idol of the day, and it was at one time a question in a certain club whether “La Ravissante Celia,” should not be proclaimed the tutelar divinity of regenerated France, when on a sudden she fell sick and was confined by a violent fever for ten days, in which time a new object of interest had sprung up, and on her re-appearance she was pronounced *passée!* — her beauty was looked upon as departed—her voice cracked—her manners affected—her powers extinct.

A great sale was announced at a magnificent apartment on the Boulevard des Italiens soon after this, where all Paris hurried in enthusiastic anxiety to behold the wreck of one of the most gorgeous establishments ever possessed by a *lionne* of celebrity. There were cashmeers of incredible price, silks and velvets of the most bewildering splendour, laces and jewels of startling costliness —furniture of hitherto unheard of elegance—

bijoutirie, of graceful shapes, never before dreamed of—pictures of enormous value, and statues of surpassing beauty—all formerly belonging to the now ruined and sentimentally pitied Celia, whose necessities had obliged her to part with all—or rather all of whose possessions had been seized by creditors.

In a flying fraternal visit paid by a band of military heroes to a neighbouring country, there figured amongst the ranks a young *cantinière*, whose grace and beauty were the theme of every tongue, and to obtain a sight of whom was the object of every stranger eye as she marched by the side of the company to which she belonged, and dealt out to her admiring companions the refreshing beverage which it was her office to dispense to them. Her lively air, bold step, flashing eye, and assured and self-possessed demeanour won for her golden opinions from all, and the name of “La Jolie Celia” became a word of animation everywhere.

Amongst the names of the sufferers in a convict ship, bound for Australia, which was buried off a port on the coast of Wales on its outward voyage, where it had put in from stress of weather, and was about, after refitting, to continue its melancholy voyage, occurred that of “Celia Sawyer,” read by Mr. and Mrs. Loftus, and pointed out to

each other in silence, as they laid down the paper which contained it, with a sigh and a shudder.

After a time the united families settled at their respective homes, all chosen to be near Loftus Hall and Fairfax Place, and as Lord Derrington's Park was in the vicinity, Miss Clinton had the satisfaction of enjoying a society congenial to her, and so happy were they all in each other that they rarely left Derbyshire except for a few weeks of the London season, an event which seldom happened but in the case of any great star appearing in the musical world.

Mr. Ben Goldspin, in spite of his opinion that marriage was "humbug," at length was discovered to have given his hand, to the great disgust of his mother, to a pretty chambermaid of Derby, having been rejected by several young ladies who had seen him horsewhipped by Captain Brighty. Mr. Jack Goldspin, still professing to look upon the marriage state as "gammon," remains true to his principles, and has not changed his bachelor position.

Miss Kate Brixton, though a constant visitor at all the fashionable watering places in England, has not yet become a wife; but it is whispered that she is about to marry an old Indian officer, very gouty and very rich, who is said to have proposed for her.

William Wybrow passes his life in study : literature and science occupying all his time : he repaid his mother's tenderness by devoted affection, and they are companions in pensive but not discontented retirement, always showing much kindness to poor Mrs. Spicer, whose muse occasionally inspires her on some festive occasion in which her friends and benefactors are interested.

A good book
THE END.

which should not exceed 10 per cent of the total value of the production, and the proportion of which has been estimated to be about one-half. Therefore, all income of citizens, by anticipation, may result from two main sources, namely, from their productive work and from money sent by their relatives or from other citizens. These two sources of income are the only ones which can be regarded as reliable, since they are not subject to sudden fluctuations.

It is evident that the first source of income is more reliable than the second, because the former is based on the actual performance of labor, while the latter depends on the personal relations of the individual with his relatives.

It is also evident that the second source of income is less reliable than the first, because it depends on the personal relations of the individual with his relatives, and these relations are not always stable.

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